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THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND  
CHRISTIAN BELIEF





# THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF

BY

GEORGE PARK FISHER, D.D., LL.D.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY  
IN YALE UNIVERSITY

*REVISED EDITION: IN GREAT PART REWRITTEN*

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To

WILLIAM SANDAY D.D., LL.D.

LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AT OXFORD

AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH

WHOSE WRITINGS ARE AN EXAMPLE TO CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS

OF THOROUGH INVESTIGATION AND FAULTLESS CANDOR

*This Volume is Dedicated*





## PREFACE

WHEN I found that this book after a score of years since its publication was still widely read at home and abroad, I felt something like an obligation to put it in a form more consonant with what I should wish to say at present. I have done much in revising and recasting its contents, especially since gaining as emeritus professor the continuity of time so favorable to literary work. The leading propositions in the book will not be found to be materially altered. The arguments in support of them have experienced modifications of some importance, and still more the language in which they are set forth. The relations of Christian Theism to natural and physical science are more elaborately discussed than in the earlier edition. The same is true of the evidence pertaining to the origin and authorship of the Gospels. In preparing to take up anew the first of these main topics, I have resorted to the writings of naturalists of the best repute and been aided by personal converse with adepts in these branches. I have meant to treat with just respect the authority of these sources of knowledge. At the same time every discerning student understands the necessity of drawing a line between the real data of science, with the conclusions fairly deduced and the metaphysics often mingled pretty largely in treatises which, on their own ground, may be safe guides.

By German scholars, some of them of much celebrity, it is felt to be high time to utter a protest against what had grown to be a disrespect, as prevalent as it is unreasonable, for early ecclesiastical tradition relative to the date of New Testament writings. The reaction against the moribund formula of the impeccability of Scripture even outside the limits of moral and religious doctrine has opened the door to a boundless field of conjecture in handling the New Testament narratives, both as to the Introduction and in the special precinct of exegesis. Upon this license a sounder Biblical criticism is called upon to impose a proper restraint. In reference to the New Testament

narratives, I see no reason for setting aside the traditional ascription of the book of Acts — including the passages from a fellow-traveller of Paul, speaking in the first person — to the authorship of Luke, the writer of the third Gospel. Nor am I convinced of the non-apostolic or composite authorship of the fourth Gospel. The suggestion, for one thing, that there was a confusion of names on the part of Irenæus — a mistaking by him in the discourses of Polycarp of one John when another was meant — appears to me improbable in the extreme. The inference, based on the Synoptics, for the negative position on the question of authorship strikes me as resting on misinterpretation of the first three Gospels, and an indefensible scepticism concerning additional matter contained in the fourth.

Of the two branches of Christian Evidences, the internal or moral, and the external proof from miracles, it will be seen that the precedence is accorded to the former. This is a point of difference from the older method usual in the school of Paley. In truth they are two mutually supporting species of evidence.

I abstain, in deference to what might be their preference, from mentioning the names of friends whom I have consulted with profit in the composition and issue of this work. I must be allowed to make one exception, and to express my thanks to Professor Charles J. H. Ropes, of Bangor, who has kindly read the proof-sheets of several chapters, respecting which his learning and accuracy were especially helpful.

I must expect that, among the readers who may be interested in the general subject of this volume, some will be less attracted by the sections that are concerned with the philosophical objections to theism, or with the details of critical evidence on the genuineness of the Gospels. But even this class, I trust, will find the major part of the book not altogether ill-suited to their wants. I venture to indulge the hope that they may derive from it some aid in clearing up perplexities, and some new light upon the nature of the Christian faith and its relation to the Scriptures. Fortunately readers as well as teachers are at liberty to exercise the right of omission.

G. P. F.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS volume embraces a discussion of the evidences of both natural and revealed religion. Prominence is given to topics having special interest at present from their connection with modern theories and difficulties. With respect to the first division of the work, the grounds of the belief in God, it hardly need be said that theists are not all agreed as to the method to be pursued, and as to what arguments are of most weight in the defence of this fundamental truth. I can only say of these introductory chapters, that they are the product of long study and reflection. The argument of design and the bearing of evolutionary doctrine on its validity are fully considered. It is made clear, I believe, that no theory of evolution which is not pushed to the extreme of materialism and fatalism—dogmas which lack all scientific warrant—weakens the proof from final causes. In dealing with antitheistic theories, the agnostic philosophy, partly from the show of logic and of system which it presents, partly from the guise of humility which it wears,—not to speak of the countenance given it by some naturalists of note,—seemed to call for particular attention. One radical question in the conflict with atheism is whether man himself is really a personal being, whether he has a moral history distinct from a merely natural history. If he has not, then it is idle to talk about theism, but equally idle to talk about the data of ethics. Ethics must share the fate of religion. How can there be serious belief in responsible action when man is not free, and is not even a substantial entity? If this question were disposed of, further difficulties, to be sure, would be left in the path of agnostic ethics. How can self-seeking breed benevolence, or self-sacrifice and the sense of duty spring out of the

“struggle for existence”? Another radical question is that of the reality of knowledge. Are things truly knowable? Or is what we call knowledge a mere phantasmagoria, produced we know not by what? This is the creed which some one has aptly formulated in the Shakespearean lines:—

“We *are* such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.”

In the second division of the work the course pursued is different from that usually taken by writers on the Evidences of Revelation. A natural effect of launching an ordinary inquirer at once upon a critical investigation of the authorship of the Gospels is to bewilder his mind among patristic authorities that are strange to him. I have preferred to follow, though with an opposite result, the general method adopted of late by noted writers of the sceptical schools. I have undertaken to show that when we take the Gospels as they stand, prior to researches into the origin of them, the miraculous element in the record is found to carry in it a self-verifying character. On the basis of what must be, and actually is, conceded, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the miracles occurred. This vantage-ground once fairly gained, the matter of the authorship and date of the Gospels can be explored without the bias which a prejudice against the miraculous elements in the narrative creates against its apostolic origin. Then it remains to establish the truthfulness of the apostolic witnesses, and, further, to vindicate the supernatural features of the Gospel history from the objection that is suggested by the stories of pagan miracles and by the legends of the saints. . . . In earlier and later chapters I have sought to direct the reader into lines of reflection which may serve to impress him with the truth contained in the remark that the strongest proof of Christianity is afforded by Christianity itself and by Christendom as an existing fact.

G. P. F.



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THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND  
CHRISTIAN BELIEF

καλῶς, ἔφη, λέγεις, ὁ Σιμμίας· καὶ ἐγὼ τέ σοι ἐρῶ ὁ ἀπορῶ, καὶ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἀποδέχεται τὰ εἰρημένα. ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἴσως ὥσπερ καὶ σοὶ τὸ μὲν σαφὲς εἶδέναι ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ ἢ ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἢ παγχάλεπόν τι, τὸ μέντοι αὐτὰ λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτῶν μὴ οὐχὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ ἐλέγχειν καὶ μὴ προαφίστασθαι, πρὶν ἂν πανταχῇ σκοπῶν ἀπείρῃ τις, πάννυ μάλθακός εἶναι ἀνδρός· δεῖν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὰ ἐν γέ τι τοιούτων διαπράξασθαι, ἢ μαθεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει ἢ εὐρεῖν ἢ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατον, τὸν γοῦν βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων λαβόντα καὶ δυσέξελεγκτότατον, ἐπὶ τούτου ὀχοῦμενον ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σχεδίας κινδυνεύοντα διαπλεῦσαι τὸν βίον, εἰ μὴ τις δύναται ἀσφαλέςτερον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον ἐπὶ βεβαιότερον ὀχήματος, λόγον θεῖον τινός, διαπορευθῆναι. καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν ἔγωγε οὐκ ἐπισχυνθήσομαι ἐρέσθαι, ἐπειδὴ καὶ σὺ ταῦτα λέγεις, οὐδ' ἐμάντον αἰτιάσομαι ἐν ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ ὅτι νῦν οὐκ εἶπον ἃ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ. Plato, *Phædo*, 85 [the topic being 'The Concerns of the Soul']

"VERY good, Socrates," said Simmias; "then I will tell you my difficulty, and Cebes will tell you his. I feel myself (and I daresay that you have the same feeling) how hard or rather impossible is the attainment of any certainty about questions such as these in the present life. And yet I should deem him a coward who did not prove what is said about them to the uttermost, or whose heart failed him before he had examined them on every side. For he should persevere until he has achieved one of two things: either he should discover, or be taught, the truth about them; or, if this be impossible, I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human theories, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life—not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him. And now, as you bid me, I will venture to question you, and then I shall not have to reproach myself hereafter with not having said at the time what I think. For when I consider the matter, either alone or with Cebes, the argument does certainly appear to me, Socrates, to be not sufficient." — *From the Version of Jowett, ed. 3.*

"THE only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulgated as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing divine revelation should. And therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of Scripture; unless the prophets, or apostles, or our Lord, had promised that the book containing the divine revelation should be secure from these things." — *Bishop Butler, ANALOGY, Part II. chap. iii.*

# THE GROUNDS OF THEISTIC AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF

## CHAPTER I

### THE PERSONALITY OF GOD AND OF MAN : THE SELF-REVELATION OF GOD IN THE HUMAN SOUL

THEISM signifies not only that there is a ground or cause of all things, — so much every one who makes an attempt to account for himself and for the world around him admits, — but also that the Cause of all things thus presupposed is a personal Being, of whom an image is presented in the human mind. This image falls short of being adequate, only as it involves limits, — limits, however, which cleave not to intelligence in itself, but simply to intelligence in its finite form.

Belief in the personality of man, and belief in the personality of God, stand or fall together. A glance at the history of religion would suggest that these two beliefs are for some reason inseparable. Where faith in the personality of God is weak, or is altogether wanting, as in the case of the pantheistic religions of the East, the perception which men have of their own personality is found to be in an equal degree indistinct. The feeling of individuality is dormant. The soul indolently ascribes to itself a merely phenomenal being. It conceives of itself as appearing for a moment, like a wavelet on the ocean, to vanish again in the all-ingulfing essence whence it emerged. Philosophical theories which substitute matter, or an impersonal Idea, or an "Unknowable," for the self-conscious Deity, likewise dissipate the personality of man as ordinarily conceived. If they disown the tenet that God is a Spirit, they decline with equal emphasis to affirm that man is a spirit. The pantheistic and atheistic schemes are in this respect consistent in their logic. Out of man's perception of his own personal attributes arises the belief in a personal God. On this fact

of our own personality the validity of the evidence for theism is conditioned.

The essential characteristics of personality are self-consciousness and self-determination ; that is to say, these are the elements common to all spiritual beings. Perception, whether its object be material or mental, involves a perceiving subject. The "*cogito ergo sum*" of Descartes is not properly an argument. I do not deduce my existence from the fact of my putting forth an act of thought. The Cartesian maxim simply denotes that in the act the agent is of necessity brought to light, or disclosed to himself. He becomes cognizant of himself in the fluctuating states of thought, feeling, and volition. This apprehension of self is intuitive. It is conditioned on experience. It is not a possession of infancy. Yet it is not an *idea* of self that emerges, not a bare phenomenon, as some philosophers have imagined ; but the *ego* is immediately presented, and there is an inexpugnable conviction of its reality. Idealism, or the doctrine that sense-perception is a modification of the mind that is due exclusively to its own nature, and is elicited by nothing exterior to itself, is, if anything, less repugnant to reason than is the denial of the reality of the *ego*. Whatever may be true of external things, of self we have an intuitive knowledge. If I judge that there is no real table before me on which I seem to be writing, and no corporeal organs for seeing or touching it, I nevertheless cannot escape the conviction that it is *I* who thus judge. To talk of thought without a thinker, of belief without a believer, is to utter words void of meaning. The indivisible unity and permanent identity of the *ego* are necessarily involved in self-consciousness. I know myself as a single, separate entity. Personal identity is presupposed in every act of memory. Go back as far as recollection can carry us, it is the same self who was the subject of all the mental experiences which memory can recall. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but I who utter these words am the same being that I was a score or threescore years ago. I look forward to the future, and know that to *me*, and not to another, the consequences of my actions are directly chargeable. In the endless succession of thoughts, feelings, choices, in all the mutations of opinion and of character, the identity of the *ego* abides. From the dawn of consciousness, as soon as recollection is awake, to my last breath, I do not part with myself. The abnormal experience, in certain cases,

of double consciousness no more disproves this truth than occasional instances of hallucination belie the fact of sense-perception. "If we speak of the mind as a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future, we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or *ego*, is something different from any series of feelings, or of accepting the paradox that something which is *ex hypothesi* but a series of feelings can be aware of itself as a series." So writes John Stuart Mill. Yet, on the basis of this astounding assumption that a series can be self-conscious, Mill was minded to frame his philosophy, and was only deterred by the confessed insurmountable difficulty of supposing memory with no being capable of remembering.

The second constituent element of personality is self-determination. This act is likewise essential to distinct self-consciousness. Were there no exercise of will, were the mind wholly passive under all impressions from without, the clear consciousness of self would never be evoked. In truth, self in that case would have only an inchoate being.<sup>1</sup> "It is in the will, in purposive action, and particularly in our moral activity, as Fichte, to my mind, conclusively demonstrated, that we lay hold upon reality. All that we know might be but a dream-procession of shadows, and the mind of the dreamer no more than the still mirror in which they are reflected, if, indeed, it were anything but the shifting shadows themselves. But in the purposive 'I will,' each man is real, and is immediately conscious of his own reality. Whatever else may or may not be real, this is real. This is the fundamental belief, around which scepticism may weave its maze of doubts and logical puzzles, but from which it is eventually powerless to dislodge us, because no argument can affect an immediate certainty, — a certainty, moreover, on which our whole view of the universe depends."<sup>2</sup> That I originate my voluntary actions in the sense that they are not the effect or unavoidable consequence of antecedents, whether in the mind or out of it, is a fact of consciousness. This is what is meant by the freedom of the will. It is a definition of "choice." Thoughts spring up in

<sup>1</sup> The view of self-consciousness in the foregoing remarks is quite contrary to the view, if taken in the proper sense of the terms, that "individuals may be included in other individuals" and that there is "a genuine identity of Being in various individuals."

<sup>2</sup> A. Seth, *Two Lectures on Theism*, p. 46.

the mind, and succeed one another under laws of association whose absolute control is limited only by the power we have of concentrating attention on one object or another within the horizon of consciousness. Desires reaching out to various forms of good spring up unbidden. They, too, are subject to regulation through no power inherent in themselves. But self-determination, as the very term signifies, is attended with an irresistible conviction that the direction of the will is self-imparted. We leave out of account here the nature of habit, or the tendency of choice once made or often repeated to perpetuate itself. That a moral bondage may ensue from an abuse of liberty is conceded. The mode and degree in which habit affects freedom is an important topic; but it is one which we do not need to consider in this place.<sup>1</sup> That the will is free—that is, both exempt from constraint by causes exterior, which is fatalism, and not a mere spontaneity, shut up to one path by a force acting from within, which is determinism—is immediately evident to every unsophisticated mind. We can initiate action by the exercise of an agency which is neither irresistibly controlled by motives, nor determined, without any capacity of alternative action, by a proneness inherent in its nature. No truth is more definitely or abundantly sanctioned by the common sense of mankind. Those who in theory reject it, continually assert it in practice. The languages of men would have to be reconstructed, the business of the world would come to a standstill, if the denial of the freedom of the will were to be carried out with rigorous consistency. This freedom is not only attested in consciousness; it is evinced by that ability to resist inducements brought to bear on the mind which we are conscious of exerting. We can withstand temptation to wrong by the exertion of an energy which consciously emanates from ourselves, and which we know that, the circumstances remaining the same, we could abstain from exerting. If motives have an *influence*, that *influence* is not tantamount to deterministic efficiency. Praise and blame, and the punishments and rewards, of whatever kind, which imply these judgments, are

<sup>1</sup> Plainly, circumstances, including prior courses of conduct, may render a particular direction of choice more, or less, difficult. "There is a growth in moral freedom" (Ladd, *Philosophy of Conduct*, p. 138). But the difficulty thus arising is not of a kind or degree to destroy the capacity of freely determining the action of the will.



plainly irrational, save on the tacit assumption of the autonomy of self. Deny free-will, and remorse, as well as self-approbation, is deprived of an essential ingredient. It is then impossible to distinguish remorse from regret. Ill-desert becomes a fiction. This is not to argue against the necessitarian doctrine, merely on the ground of its bad tendencies. It is true that the debasement of the individual, and the wreck of social order, would follow upon the unflinching adoption of the necessitarian theory in the judgments and conduct of men. Virtue would no more be thought to *deserve* love; crime would no longer be felt to *deserve* hatred. But independently of this aspect of the subject, there is, to say the very least, a strong presumption against the truth of a theorem in philosophy that clashes with the common sense and moral sentiments of the race. The awe-inspiring sense of individual responsibility, the sting of remorse, the shame of detected sin, emotions of moral reprobation and moral approval, ought not to be treated as illusive, unless they can be demonstrated to be so. Here are phenomena which no metaphysical scheme can afford to ignore. Surely no theory can ever look for general acceptance which is obliged to eviscerate or explain away these familiar facts and leave an irreconcilable conflict in human nature.

How shall the feeling that we are free be accounted for if it be contrary to the fact? Let us glance at what famous necessitarians have to say in answer to this inquiry. First, let us hear one of the foremost representatives of this school. His solution is one that has often been repeated. "Men believe themselves to be free," says Spinoza, "entirely from this, that, though conscious of their acts, they are ignorant of the causes by which their acts are determined. The idea of freedom, therefore, comes of men not knowing the cause of their acts."<sup>1</sup> This is a bare assertion, confidently made, but void of proof. It surely is not a self-evident truth that our belief in freedom arises in this manner. Further, when we make the motives preceding any particular act of choice the object of deliberate scrutiny, the sense of freedom is not in the least weakened. The motives are distinctly seen, yet the consciousness of liberty, or of a pluripotent power, remains in full vigor. Moreover, choice is not the resultant of motives, as in a case of the composition of forces. One motive is followed, and its rival rejected. Hume has another explanation of what he con-

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, P. ii. prop. xxxv.

siders the delusive feeling of freedom. "Our idea," he says, "of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other."<sup>1</sup> This constant conjunction of things is all that we know; but men have "a strong propensity" to believe in "something like a necessary connection" between the antecedent and the consequent. "When, again, they turn their reflections towards the operations of their own minds, and *feel* no such connection of the motive and the action, they are thence apt to suppose that there is a difference between the effects which result from material force, and those which arise from thought and intelligence."<sup>2</sup> In other words, a double delusion is asserted. First, the mind, for some unexplained reason, falsely imagines a tie between the material antecedent and consequent, and then, missing such a bond between motive and choice, it rashly infers freedom. So far from this being a true representation, it is the mind's conscious exertion of energy that enables it even to conceive of a causal relation between things external. Hume's solution depends on the theory that nothing properly called power exists. It is assumed that there is no power, either in motives or in the will. Hume's necessity, unlike that of Spinoza, is mere uniformity of succession, choice following motive with regularity, but with no nexus between the two.

J. S. Mill, adopting an identical theory of causation, from which power is eliminated, lands in the same general conclusion, on this question of free-will, as that reached by Hume. Herbert Spencer holds that the fact "that every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do (supposing there are no external hindrances)" is the sum of our liberty. He states that "the dogma of free-will" is the proposition "that every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire." That is, he confounds choice and volition with desire, denies the existence of an elective power distinct from the desires, and imputes a definition of free-will to the advocates of freedom which they unanimously repudiate. As to the feeling of freedom, Mr. Spencer says, "The illusion con-

<sup>1</sup> *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, P. i. § 8 (*Essays*, ed. Green and Grose, vol. ii. p. 67).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

sists in supposing that at each moment the *ego* . . . is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists.”<sup>1</sup> When a man says that he determined to perform a certain action, his error is in supposing his conscious self to have been “something separate from the group of psychical states” constituting his “psychical self.” “Will is nothing but the general name given to the special feeling or feelings which for a moment prevail over others.”<sup>2</sup> The “composite psychical state which excites the action is at the same time the *ego* which is said to will the action.” The soul is resolved into a group of psychical states due to “motor changes” excited by an impression received from without. If there is no personal agent, if *I* is a collective noun, meaning a “group” of sensations, it is a waste of time to argue that there is no freedom. “What we call a mind,” wrote Hume long ago, “is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity.” Professor Huxley, who quotes this passage, would make no other correction than to substitute an assertion of nescience for the positive denial. He would rather say, “that we know nothing more of the mind than that it is a series of perceptions.”<sup>3</sup>

Before commenting on this definition of the mind, which robs it of its unity, it is worth while to notice what account the advocates of necessity have to give of the feelings of praise and blame, tenants of the soul which appear to claim a right to be there, and which it is very hard even for speculative philosophers to dislodge. On this topic Spinoza is remarkably chary of explanation. “I designate as *gratitude*,” he says, “the feeling we experience from the acting of another, done, as we imagine, to gratify us; and *aversion*, the uneasy sense we experience when we imagine

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. p. 500.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 503. It is sometimes said that “Hamlet is left out of the play,” but this is seldom done, as in this instance, by an explicit avowal. It recalls the lines of Goethe:—

“Wer will was Lebendigs erkennen und beschreiben,  
Sucht erst den Geist herauszutreiben,  
Dann hat er die Theile in seiner Hand,  
Fehlt, leider! nur das geistige Band.”

<sup>3</sup> Huxley's *Hume, with Helps to the Study of Berkeley*, p. 75; also *Collected Essays*, vol. vi.

anything done with a view to our disadvantage; and, whilst we *praise* the former, we are disposed to *blame* the latter.”<sup>1</sup> What does Spinoza mean by the phrase “with a view to our advantage” or “disadvantage”? As the acts done, in either case, were unavoidable on the part of the doer, — as much so as the circulation of blood in his veins, — it is impossible to see any reasonableness in praise or blame, thankfulness or resentment. Why should we resent the stab of an assassin more than the kick of a horse? Why should we be any more grateful to a benefactor than we are to the sun for shining on us? If the sun were conscious of shining on us, and of shining on us “with a view” to warm us, in Spinoza’s meaning of the phrase, but with not the least power to do otherwise, how would that consciousness found a claim to our gratitude? What we are looking for is a ground of approbation or condemnation. When Spinoza proceeds to define “just” and “unjust,” “sin” and “merit,” he broaches a theory not dissimilar to that of Hobbes, that there is no natural law but the desires, that “in the state of nature there is nothing done that can properly be characterized as just or unjust,” that in “the natural state,” prior to the organization of society, “faults, offences, crimes, cannot be conceived.”<sup>2</sup> As for repentance, Spinoza does not hesitate to lay down the thesis that “repentance is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason; but he who repents of any deed he has done is twice miserable or impotent.”<sup>3</sup> Penitence is defined as “sorrow accompanying the idea of something we believe we have done of free-will.”<sup>4</sup> It mainly depends, he tells us, on education. Since free-will is an illusive notion, penitence must be inferred to be in the same degree irrational. To these opinions, not less superficial than they are immoral, the ablest advocates of necessity are driven when they stand face to face with the phenomena of conscience.

Mill, in seeking to vindicate the consistency of punishment with his doctrine of determinism, maintains that it is right to punish; first, as penalty tends to restrain and cure an evil-doer, and secondly, as it tends to secure society from aggression. “It is just to punish,” he says, “so far as it is necessary for this purpose,” for the security of society, “exactly as it is just to put a wild beast to death (without unnecessary suffering) for the same object.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, P. iii. prop. xxix. schol.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, P. iv. prop. xxxvii. schol. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, P. iv. prop. liv.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, P. iii. def. 27.    <sup>5</sup> *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton’s Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 292.

It will hardly be asserted by any one that a brute *deserves* punishment, in the proper and accepted meaning of the term. Surely to behead a *man* requires a defence different *in kind* from that required to crush a *mosquito*. Later, Mill attempts to find a basis for a true responsibility; but in doing so he virtually, though unwittingly, surrenders his necessitarian theory. "The true doctrine of the causation of human actions maintains," he says, "that not only our conduct, but our character, is in part amenable to our will; that we can, by employing the proper means, improve our character; and that if our character is such, that, while it remains what it is, it necessitates us to do wrong, it will be just to apply motives which will necessitate us *to strive* for its improvement, and to *emancipate ourselves* from the other necessity."<sup>1</sup> Here, while verbally holding to his theory of the deterministic agency of motives, he introduces the phrases which I have put in italics, — phrases which carry in them the idea of free personal endeavor, and exclude that of determinism. "The true doctrine of necessity," says Mill, "while maintaining that our character is formed by our circumstances, asserts at the same time that our desires can do much to alter our circumstances." But how about our control over our desires? Have we any more control, direct or indirect, over them than over our circumstances? If not, "the true doctrine of necessity" no more founds responsibility than does the naked fatalism which Mill disavows. It is not uncommon for necessitarian writers, unconsciously it may be, to draw a veil over their theory by affirming that actions are the necessary fruit of a character already formed; thus leaving room for the supposition, that, in the forming of that character, the will exerted at some time an independent agency. But such an agency, it need not be said, at whatever point it is placed, is incompatible with their main doctrine.

The standing argument for necessity, drawn out by Hobbes, Collins, *et id omne genus*, is based on the law of cause and effect. It is alleged, that if motives are not efficient in determining the will, then an event — namely, the particular direction of the will in a case of choice, or the choice of one object *rather than* another — is without a cause. This has been supposed to be an invincible argument. In truth, however, the event in question is not without a cause in the sense that would be true of an event

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 299.



wholly disconnected from an efficient antecedent, — of a world, for example, springing into being without a Creator. The mind is endued with the power to act in either of two directions, the proper circumstances being present ; and, whichever way it may actually move, its motion is its own, the result of its own power. That the mind is not subject to the law of causation which holds good elsewhere than in the sphere of intelligent, voluntary action, is the very thing asserted. Self-activity, initial motion, is the distinctive attribute of spiritual agents. The prime error of the necessitarian is in unwarrantably assuming that the mind in its voluntary action is subject to the same law which prevails in the realm of things material and unintelligent. This opinion is not only false, but shallow. For where do we first get our notion of power or causal energy? Where but from the exercise of our own wills? If we exerted no voluntary agency, we should have no idea of causal efficiency. Being outside of the circle of our experience, causation would be utterly unknown. Necessitarians, in the ranks of whom are found at the present day not a few students of physical science, frequently restrict their observation to things without themselves, and, having formulated a law of causation for the objects with which they are chiefly conversant, they forthwith extend it over the mind, — an entity, despite its close connection with matter, *toto genere* different. They should remember that the very terms “force,” “power,” “energy,” “cause,” are only intelligible from the experience we have of the exercise of will. They are applied in some modified sense to things external. But we are immediately cognizant of no cause but will, and the nature of that cause must be learned from consciousness ; it can never be learned from an inspection of things heterogeneous to the mind, and incapable by themselves of imparting to it the faintest notion of power.

It is sometimes said that the doctrine of the liberty of the will is self-destructive. The will, it is said, is reduced to a blind power, dissevered from intelligence and freedom. But “freedom of the will” is a phrase which means “freedom of self,” freedom of the mind, an indivisible unit — which includes intelligence and sensibility, yet is enslaved to neither.

But it is complained that if the operations of the will are not governed by law, psychologic science is impossible. “Psychical changes,” says Herbert Spencer, “either conform to law, or they



do not. If they do not conform to law, this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense ; no science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free-will."<sup>1</sup> Were uniformity found, as a matter of fact, to characterize the self-determinations of the mind, even then necessity would not be proved. Suppose the mind always to determine itself in strict conformity with reason ; this would not prove constraint, or disprove freedom. If it were shown, that, as a matter of fact, the mind always chooses in the same way, the antecedents being precisely the same, neither fatalism nor determinism would be thereby demonstrated. If it be meant, by the conformity of the will to law, that no man has the power to choose otherwise than he actually chooses ; that, to take an example from moral conduct, no thief, or seducer, or assassin, was capable of any such previous exercise of will as would have caused him to abstain from the crimes which he has perpetrated, — then every reasonable, not to say righteous, person will deny the proposition. The alternative that a work on psychology, so far as it rests on a theory of fatalism, is "sheer nonsense," it is far better to endure than to fly in the face of common sense and of the conscience of the race. But psychology has left to it a wide enough field without the need of denying room for moral liberty. A book of ethics which is constructed on the assumption that the free and responsible nature of man is an illusive notion is worth no more than the postulate on which it is founded.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the argument against freedom from the alleged inconsistency with the law of causation which it involves, there is a second objection which is frequently urged. We are reminded that

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, vol. i. p. 621. This passage is not in the 4th ed. See vol. ii. p. 503. The doctrine remains the same. "That the *ego* is the passing group of feelings and ideas, . . . is true if we include the body and its functions," p. 503. The action is determined by a "certain composite mass of emotion and thought," p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, Spencer is not alone in these pleas for determinism. For example, Wundt, who holds to the absolute sway of causality, "psychical causality," in the specification of choice, complains that without it there can be "no psychology, no science of mind" (*The Principles of Morality*, etc., p. 53). Wundt, like Mill, is anxious to remind his readers that "motives are effects as well as causes," and that one's "whole previous history" lies back of any particular choice (pp. 10, 38). But, as with Mill, in these prior choices, of which character is the result, no real freedom of self is presupposed.

there is an order of history. Events, we are told, within the sphere of voluntary agency succeed each other with regularity of sequence. We can predict what individuals will do with a considerable degree of confidence, — with as much confidence as could be expected considering the complexity of the phenomena. There is a progress of a community and of mankind which evinces a reign of law within the compass of personal action. The conduct of one generation is shaped by the conduct of that which precedes it.

That there is a plan in the course of human affairs, all believers in Providence hold. History does not present a chaotic series of occurrences, but a system, a progressive order, to be more or less clearly discerned. The inference, however, that the wills of men are destitute of self-activity, is rashly drawn. If it were thought that we are confronted with two apparently antagonistic truths, whose point of reconciliation is beyond our ken, the situation would have its parallels in other branches of human inquiry. We should be justified in holding to each truth on its own grounds, each being sufficiently verified, and in waiting for the solution of the problem. But the whole objection can be shown to rest, in great part, on misunderstanding of the doctrine of free-will. Freedom does not involve, of necessity, a haphazard departure from regularity in the actual choices of men under the same circumstances. As already remarked, that men *do* act in one way, in the presence of given circumstances, does not prove that they *must* so act. Again, those who propound this objection fail to discern the real points along the path of developing character where freedom is exercised. They often fail to perceive that there are habits of will which take their rise in self-determination, — habits for which men are responsible so far as they are morally right or wrong, and which exist within them as abiding purposes or voluntary principles of conduct. Of a man who loves money better than anything else, it may be predicted that he will seize upon any occasion that offers itself to make an advantageous bargain. But this love of money is a voluntary principle which he can curb, and, influenced by moral considerations, supersede by a higher motive of conduct. The fact of habit, voluntary habit, springing ultimately from choice, practically circumscribes the variability of action, and contributes powerfully to the production of a certain degree of uniformity of conduct, on which prediction as to what individuals will do is founded. But all predictions in regard

to the future conduct of men, or societies of men, are liable to fail, not merely because of the varied and complicated data in the case of human action, but because new influences, not in the least coercive, may still set at defiance all statistical vaticinations. A religious reform, like that of John Wesley, gives rise to an essential alteration of the conduct of multitudes, changes the face of society in extensive districts, and upsets, for example, previous calculations as to the percentage of crime to be expected in the regions affected. The seat of moral freedom is deep in the radical self-determinations by which the chief ends of conduct, the motives of life in the aggregate, are fixed. Kant had a profound perception of this truth, although he erred in limiting absolutely the operations of free-will to the "noumenal" sphere, and in relegating all moral conduct, except the primal choice, to the realm of phenomenal and therefore necessary action. A theist finds no difficulty in ascribing moral evil wholly to the will of the creature, and in accounting for the orderly succession of events, or the plan of history, by the overruling agency of God, which has no need to interfere with human liberty, or to constrain or to crush the free and responsible nature of man, but knows how to pilot the race onward, be the rocks and cross-currents where and what they may be.

Self-consciousness and self-determination, each involving the other, are the essential peculiarities of mind. With self-determination is inseparably connected purpose. The intelligent action of the will is for an end; and this preconceived end—which is last in the order of time, although first in thought—is termed the final cause. It is the goal to which the volitions dictated by it point and lead. So simple an act of will as the volition to lift a finger is for a purpose. The thought of the result to be effected precedes that efficient act of the will by which, in some inscrutable way, the requisite muscular motion is produced. I purpose to send a letter to a friend. There is a plan present in thought before it is resolved upon, or converted into an intention, and prior to the several exertions of voluntary power by which it is accomplished. Guided by this plan, I enter my library, open a drawer, find the proper writing-materials, compose the letter, seal it, and despatch it. Here is a series of voluntary actions done in pursuance of a plan which antedated them in consciousness, and through them is realized. The movements of brain and muscle

which take place in the course of the proceeding are subservient to the conscious plan by which all the power employed in realizing it is directed. This is rational voluntary action; it is action for an end. In this way the whole business of human life is carried forward. All that is termed "art," in the broadest meaning of the word,—that is, all that is not included either in the products of material nature, which the wit and power of men can neither produce nor modify, or in the strictly involuntary states of mind with their physical effects,—comes into being in the way described. The conduct of men in their individual capacity, the organization of families and states, the government of nations, the management of armies, the diversified pursuits of industry, whatever is because men have willed it to be, is due to self-determination involving design.

The opinion has not wholly lacked supporters that man is an automaton. All that he does they have ascribed to a chain of causes wholly embraced within a circle of nervous and muscular movements. Some, finding it impossible to ignore consciousness, have contented themselves with denying to non-material states causal agency. On this view it follows that the plan to take a journey, to build a house, or to do anything else which presupposes design, has no influence whatever upon the result. The same efforts would be produced if we were utterly unconscious of any intention to bring them to pass. The design, not being credited with the least influence or control over the instruments through which the particular end is reached, might be subtracted without affecting the result. Since consciousness neither originates nor transmits motion, and thus exerts no power, the effects of what we call voluntary agency would take place as well without it. This creed, when it is once clearly defined, is not likely to win many adherents.<sup>1</sup>

The scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy is entirely consistent with the freedom of the will and with the reciprocal influence of mind and body. Whether the general notion of energy as inhering in material bodies and transmissible is anything but a scientific metaphor, it is needless here to discuss. The doctrine is, that as the sum of matter remains the same, so is

<sup>1</sup> For a clear exposition of the consequences of denying the agency of mind, see Herbert, *The Realistic Assumptions of Modern Science*, etc., pp. 103 seq., 128 seq.

it with the sum of energy, potential or in action, in any body or system of bodies. Energy may be transmitted ; that is, lost in one body, it reappears undiminished in another, or, ceasing in one form, it is exerted in another, and this according to definite ratios. In other words, there is a correlation of the physical forces. While this is believed to be true, there is not the slightest evidence that mental action is caused by the transmitting of energy from the physical system. Nor is there any proof that the mind transfers additional energy to matter. Nor, again, is there the slightest evidence that mental action is correlated with physical. That mental action is affected by physical change is evident. That the mind acts upon the brain, modifying its state, exerting a directive power upon the nerve-centres, is equally certain. The doctrine of conservation, as its best expounders — Clerk Maxwell, for example — have perceived, does not militate in the least against the limited control of the human will and the supreme control of the divine.

Attending the inward assurance of freedom is the consciousness of moral law. While I know that I *can* do or forbear, I feel that I *ought* or *ought not*. The desires of human nature are various. They go forth to external good, which reaches the mind through the channel of the senses. They go out also to objects less tangible, as power, fame, knowledge, the esteem of others. But distinct from these diverse, and, it may be, conflicting desires, a law manifests itself in consciousness, and lays its authoritative mandate on the will. The requirement of that law in the concrete may be differently conceived. It may be grossly misapprehended. But the feeling of obligation is an ineradicable element of our being. It is universal, or as nearly so as the perception of beauty or any other essential attribute of the soul. For an ethical theory to dispense with it is suicide. It implies an ideal or end which the will is bound freely to realize. Be this end clearly or dimly discerned, and though it be in a great degree misconceived, its existence is implied in the imperative character of the law within. The confusion that may arise in respect to the contents of the law and the end to which the law points does not disprove the reality of either. An unenlightened and perverted conscience is still a conscience.

Shall the source and ground of nature and self-consciousness alike be placed in the object, the world without? This cannot be.



"Nature cannot give that which she does not herself possess. She cannot give birth to that which is *toto genere* dissimilar." Nature can take no such leap. A new beginning on a plane above Nature it is beyond the power of Nature to originate. Self-consciousness can only be referred to self-consciousness as its author and source. It can have its ground in nothing that is itself void of consciousness. Only a personal Power above Nature can account for self-consciousness in man. It presupposes an original and unconditioned, because original, self-consciousness. The spark of a divine fire is deposited in Nature ; it is in Nature, but not of it.

Thus the consciousness of God enters inseparably into the consciousness of self as its hidden background.<sup>1</sup> "The descent into our inmost being is at the same time an ascent to God." All profound reflection in which the soul withdraws from the world to contemplate its own being brings us to God, in whom we live and move. We are conscious of God in a more intimate sense than we are conscious of finite things. As they themselves are derived, so is our knowledge of them.

In order to know a limit *as* a limit, as it is often said, we must already be in some sense beyond it. "We should not be able," says Julius Müller, "in the remotest degree to surmise that our personality — that in us whereby we are exalted, not in degree only, but in kind, above every other existence — is limited, were not the consciousness of the Absolute Personality originally stamped, however obscure and however effaced the outlines may often be, upon our souls." It is in the knowledge of the Infinite One that we know ourselves as finite.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, to self-determination, the second element of person-

<sup>1</sup> Shall the conviction of the being of God that springs up in the soul in connection with feeling of dependence be regarded as the product of inference? It is nearer the truth to say that the recognition of God, more or less obscure, is something involved and even presupposed in this feeling. How can there be a sense of self as dependent, unless there be an underlying sense of a somewhat, however vaguely apprehended, on which we depend? The one feeling is an implicate of the other.

The error of many who have too closely followed Schleiermacher is in representing the feeling of dependence as void of an intellectual element. Ulrici and some other German writers avoid this mistake by using the term "Gefühls-perception" to designate that state of mind in which feeling is the predominant element, and perception is still rudimental and obscure.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Müller, *Lehre v. d. Sünde*, vol. i. pp. 101 *seq.*



ality, like self-consciousness, a limit is consciously prescribed. The limit is the moral law to which the will is bound, though not necessitated, to conform. We find this law within us, a rule for the regulation of the will. It is not merely independent of the will—this is true of the emotions generally—it speaks with *authority*. It is a voice of command and of prohibition. This rule man spontaneously identifies with the will of Him who reveals himself in consciousness as the Author of his being. The unconditional nature of the demand which we are conscious that the moral law makes upon us, against all rebellious desires and passions, in the face of our own antagonistic will, can only be explained by identifying it thus with a higher Will from which it emanates. In self-consciousness God reveals his being; in conscience he reveals his authority and his will concerning man. Through this recognition of the law of conscience as the will of God in whom we live, morality and religion coalesce.

Sir William Hamilton, in pointing out the basis of theism,<sup>1</sup> sets in contrast the natural world in which the phenomena “are produced and reproduced in the same invariable succession,” “in the chain of physical necessity,” with the phenomena of man in whom intelligence is a “free power,” being subject only to the law of duty, which he can carry into effect. This proves that in the order of existence, as we experience it in ourselves, intelligence is supreme, and as far as its liberty extends “is independent of necessity and matter.” By analogy, Hamilton argues, we are authorized to carry into the order of the universe the relation which we find in the human constitution. The argument is sound, for it is on the path of Analogy that science has made its advance. It is not reflection, however, and reasoning, but that immediate self-revelation of God in the human mind which, as explained above, is at the root of theistic faith.

It is obvious that the dictates of conscience, so far as its action is sound and normal, express the moral preferences, that is to say, the character, of God. His holiness is evidenced in the condemnation uttered within us of purposes and practices at variance with righteousness. The love of God is expressed in the mandate of conscience to exercise just and kindly feelings, to act conformably to them and to cherish a comprehensive good will. Whenever conscience is so awakened and enlightened as to discern that an

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics*, pp. 21 seq.

unselfish spirit is the law of life, the revelation in the soul is complete that God is Love.

Not through the channel of intelligence and of conscience alone, but also through that of sensibility and affection, is God manifest to the soul. Religion is communion with God. If we look attentively at religion in its pure and elevated form, as, for example, it finds expression in Psalms of the Old Testament, we shall best perceive its constituent elements, and the sources within us from which it springs. We shall find that along with the sense of obligation and of dependence in which the existence of a Supreme Being is recognized, there is intimately connected a native proclivity to rest upon, and hold converse with, Him in whom we live. The tendency to commune with Him is an essential part of the religious constitution of man. To pray to Him for help, to lean on Him for support, to worship Him, are native and spontaneous movements of the human spirit. Man feels himself drawn to the Being who reveals Himself to him in the primitive operations of intelligence and conscience, and inspires him with the sense of dependence. As man was made for God, there is a *nisus* in the direction of this union to his Creator. This tendency, which may take the form of an intense craving, may be compared to the social instinct with which it is akin. As man was made not to be alone, but to commune with other beings like himself, solitude would be an unnatural and almost unbearable state; and a longing for converse with other men is a part of his nature. In like manner, as man was made to commune with God, he is drawn to God by an inward tendency, the strength of which is derived from the vacuum left in the soul, and the unsatisfied yearning, consequent on an exclusion of God as the supreme object of love and trust. These feelings are not to be discounted from the testimony in the soul to his being.

John Fiske in his little book *Through Nature to God*,<sup>2</sup> speaks of the nascent Human Soul vaguely reaching forth toward something akin to itself not in the realm of fleeting phenomena but in the Eternal Presence beyond. He adds: "If the re-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ulrici, *Gott u. die Natur*, pp. 606 *seq.* "The general conviction of a divine existence we regard as less an inference than a perception." — Bowne, *Studies in Theism*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 188, 189.

lation thus established in the morning twilight of Man's existence between the Human Soul and a world invisible and immaterial is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term is non-existent, then I say it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation." It contradicts "all the analogies of evolution," so far as we understand it. To whatever just criticism some expressions of this author connected with the foregoing observations may be open, these statements on the "Everlasting Reality of Religion" are sound and impressive. "Our heart is restless," writes Augustine, "unless it repose in Thee."

In sense-perception external objects are brought directly to our knowledge. Through sensations compared and combined by reason, we perceive outward things in their being and relations. There are perceptions of the spirit as well as of sense. The being whom we call God may, so to speak, come in contact with the soul. As the soul, in the experience of sensations, posits the outer world, so, in analogous inward experiences, it posits God. The feelings, yearnings, aspirations, which are at the root of the spiritual perception, are not continuous, as in the perceptions of matter; they vary in liveliness; they are contingent, in a remarkable degree, on character. Hence religious faith may not have the clearness, the uniform and abiding character, which belongs to our recognition of outward things.<sup>1</sup>

The understanding is not the sole authority in the sphere of moral and religious belief. Rationalism has been defined as "a usurpation of the understanding." There are moral exactions and dictates which have a voice not to be disregarded. So, likewise, are there instinctive, almost irrepressible, instincts of feeling to be taken into account. It is the satisfaction of the spirit, and not any single organ or function of the soul, which is felt to be the criterion of full-orbed truth. "If a certain formula for expressing the nature of the world violates my moral demand, I shall be as free to throw it overboard, or at least to doubt it, as if it disappointed my demand for uniformity of sequence."<sup>2</sup> "Just as within

<sup>1</sup>On the subject of the immediate manifestation of God to the soul, and the analogy of sense-perception, the reader may be referred to Lotze, *Grundzüge d. Religionsphil.*, p. 3; *Mikrokosmos*, vol. iii. chap. iv.; Ulrici, *Gott u. die Natur*, pp. 605-624; *Gott u. der Mensch*, vol. i.; Bowne, *Studies in Theism*, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup>Professor William James, *The Will to Believe*, etc., p. 147.

the limits of theism some kinds are surviving others by reason of their greater practical rationality, so theism itself, by reason of its practical rationality, is certain to survive all lower creeds.”<sup>1</sup> “There is a moral as well as a logical rationality to be satisfied,” is a pithy sentence of the same author, who adds respecting the inquiries and suggestions of natural science that even “Physics is always seeking to satisfy our own subjective passions.”

Belief in a future life, in immortality, is closely connected with belief in God. The soul that communes with him finds in this very relation—in the sense of its own worth implied in this relation—the assurance that it is not to perish with its material organs. It is conscious of belonging to a different order of things. In proportion as the moral and religious nature is roused to activity, this consciousness gains in life and vigor. “‘But how do you wish us to bury you?’ said Crito to Socrates. ‘Just as you please,’ he answered, ‘if you only get hold of me and do not let me escape you.’ And quietly laughing and glancing at us, he said, ‘I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that this Socrates, who is now talking with you, and laying down each one of these propositions, is my very self; for his mind is full of the thought that *I* am he whom he is to see in a little while as a corpse; and so he asks how he shall bury me.’”<sup>2</sup>

The consciousness of a free and responsible nature, of a law suggestive of a personal Lawgiver, of the need of communion with the Father of the spirit, of the sense of orphanage without God, are not all that is required for the realization of religion in the soul. There must be an *acknowledgment* of God which carries in it an active concurrence of the will. The will utters its “yea” and “amen” to the attractive power of God experienced within the soul. It gives consent to the reality of that dependence and obligation to obedience, in which the finite soul stands to God. “The holding fast to the personal God and to the inviolability of conscience, is an act of the soul, conditioned on a living sense of the supreme worth of this conviction.” Faith springs from no coercion of logic. When a man is sorely tempted by plausible reasoning, but chooses to abide by the right, come what will, it is

<sup>1</sup> Professor William James, *The Will to Believe*, etc., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Phædo*, 115.

a kind of venture. The inward satisfaction, with the decision once made, requires no other testimonial. We believe in God, not on the ground of a scientific demonstration, but because it is our duty to believe in him. Faith in its general sense is defined by Coleridge as "fidelity to our own being — so far as such being is not and cannot become an object of the senses," together with its concomitants, the first of which is the acknowledgment of God.<sup>1</sup>

The refusal thus practically to acknowledge God by a ratifying act of the will, the assent of the entire man, is to enthrone the false principle of self-assertion or self-sufficiency in the soul, — false because it is contrary to the reality of things. It is a kind of self-deification. Man may refuse "to retain God in his knowledge." The result is, that the feelings out of which religion springs, and in which it is rationally founded, are not extirpated, but are driven to fasten on finite objects in the world, or on fictitious creations of the imagination. Idolatry is the enthronement of that which belongs to the creature, in the place of the Creator. There is an idolatry of which the world, in the form of power, fame, riches, pleasure, or knowledge, is the object. When the proper food is wanting, the attempt is made to appease the appetite with drugs and stimulants.

Theology has deemed itself warranted by sound philosophy, as well as by the teaching of Scripture, in maintaining, that, but for the intrusion of moral evil or the practical substitution of a finite object, real or imaginary, for God as the supreme good, the knowledge of him would shine more and more brightly in the soul, from the dawn of intelligence, keeping pace with its advancing development. The more one turns the eye within, and fastens his attention on the characteristic elements of his own spirit, the more clear and firm is found to be his belief in God. And the more completely the will follows the law that is written on the heart, the more vivid is the conviction of the reality of the Lawgiver, whose authority is expressed in it. The experience of religion carries with it a constantly growing sense of the reality of its object.

The following extracts from two writers of marked ability, although not in entire accord in their points of view, are excellent statements of a philosophical truth.

<sup>1</sup> Fresh and instructive observations on the voluntary element in belief are contained in the work cited above, *The Will to Believe*, etc., by Professor James.



"Not only is the subject active in perception, but he necessarily and inevitably has an inchoate consciousness of himself as a subject in distinction from the subjects which that activity enables him to apprehend. . . . And the same is true of the idea of God which is presupposed in the division of the self from the not-self and in all other divisions of consciousness. . . . And, like the idea of self, the idea of God must at a very early period take *some* form for us, though it may not for a very long time take an adequate form. Man may hide his inborn sense of the infinite in vague superstitions which confuse it with the finite ; but he cannot altogether escape from it, or prevent his consciousness of the finite from being disturbed by it."<sup>1</sup>

"Anterior to and independent of philosophy, a tacit faith in the ego, in external things, and in God, seems to pervade human experience ; mixing, often unconsciously, with the lives of all ; never perfectly defined, but in its fundamental ideas more or less operative ; often intellectually confused, yet never without a threefold influence in human life. . . . Life is good and happy in proportion to the due acknowledgment of all the three. Confused conceptions of the three are inexhaustible sources of two extremes — superstition and scepticism."<sup>2</sup>

But we have to look at men as they are. As a matter of fact, "the consciousness of God" is obscure, more latent than explicit, germinant rather than developed. It waits to be quickened and illuminated by the manifestation of God in nature and providence, and by instruction.

Writers on psychology have frequently neglected to give an account of *presentiment*, a state of consciousness in which feeling is predominant, and knowledge is indistinct. There are vague anticipations of truth not yet clearly discerned. It is possible to seek for something, one knows not precisely what. Were it discerned it would not have to be sought. Yet it is not utterly beyond our ken, else how could we seek for it ? Explorers and inventors may feel themselves on the threshold of great discoveries just before they are made. Poets, at least, have recognized the deep import of occult, vague feelings which almost baffle analysis. The German psychologists who have most satisfactorily handled the subject

<sup>1</sup> E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. pp. 184, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, second edition, amended (1899).



before us, as Lotze, Ulrici, Julius Müller, Nitzsch, find in their language an expressive term to designate our primitive sense or apprehension of God. It is *Ahnung*, of which our word "presage" is a partial equivalent. The apostle Paul refers to the providential control of nations as intended to incite men "to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."<sup>1</sup> He is not known, but sought for. Rather do men *feel after Him*, as a blind man moves about in quest of something, or as we grope in the dark. This philosophy of religion is conformed to the observed facts. There is that in man which makes him restless without God, discontented with every substitute for Him. The subjective basis for religion, inherent in the very constitution of the soul, is the spur to the search for God, the condition of apprehending Him when revealed (whether in nature, or in providence, or in Christianity), and the ultimate ground of certitude as to the things of faith.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> For additional remarks on the origin of religion, see Appendix, Note I.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE BEING OF GOD : THEIR FUNCTION IN GENERAL AND AS SEVERALLY CONSIDERED

It will be clear, from the foregoing chapter, that the ultimate source of the belief in God is not in processes of argument. His presence is more immediately manifest. There is a native belief, arising spontaneously in connection with the feeling of dependence and the phenomena of conscience, however obscure, undeveloped, or perverted that faith may be. The arguments for the being of God confirm, at the same time that they elucidate and define it. They are so many different points of view from which we contemplate the object of faith. Each one of them tends to show, not simply *that* God is, but *what* He is. They fill out the conception by pointing out particulars brought to light in the manifestation which God has made of Himself.

In presenting the several proofs of theism, which is the doctrine of a personal God, infinite in His attributes, we begin with the intuition which is denominated, in the language of philosophy, the Unconditioned, the Absolute. By "the Absolute" is signified that which is complete in itself, that which stands in no necessary relation to other beings. It denotes being which is independent as to existence and action. A cognate notion is that of the Infinite, which designates being without limit. The Unconditioned, in form a negative term, is more generic. It means free from all restriction. It is often used as synonymous with "the Absolute," a term positive in its significance.

We have an immediate conviction of the reality of the Absolute, that is, of being which is dependent upon no other as the condition of existence and activity. When we look abroad upon the world, we discern a multitude of objects, each bounded by others, each conditioned by beings other than itself, none of them complete or independent. We perceive everywhere demarcation, mutual dependence, interaction. Looking within, we see that our

own minds and our mental processes are in the same way restricted, conditioned. The mind has a definite constitution; the act of knowledge requires an object as its necessary condition. The spectacle of the world is that of a vast aggregate of interrelated beings, none of them independent, self-originated, self-sustained.

Inseparable from this perception of the relative, the limited, the dependent, is the idea of the Unconditioned, the Absolute. It is the correlate of the finite and conditioned. Its reality is known as implied in the reality of the world of finite, interacting, dependent existences. The Unconditioned is abstract in form, but only in form. It is not a mere negative; it must have a positive content. It is negative in its verbal form, because it is antithetical to the conditioned, and is known through it. But the idea is positive, though it be incomplete; that is to say, although we fall short of a complete grasp of the object denoted by it. The reality of the Unconditioned, almost all philosophers, except Positivists of an extreme type, recognize. Metaphysicians of the school of Hamilton and Mansel hold that, as a reality, it is an object of immediate and necessary belief, although, according to their definition of terms, they do not regard it as an object of conceptive thought. But some sort of knowledge of it there must be in order to such a belief. Moreover, the Unconditioned is not merely subjective, it is not a mere idea, as Kant, in the theoretical part of his philosophy, holds. He makes this idea necessary to the order, connection, and unity of our knowledge. We can ask for no surer criterion of real existence than this.<sup>1</sup> Unconditioned being is the silent presupposition of all our knowing. Be it observed, likewise, that the idea of the Absolute is not that of "the sum of all reality," — a quantitative notion. It is not the idea of the *Unrelated*, but of that which is not of necessity related. It does not exclude other beings, but other beings only when conceived of as a necessary complement of itself, or as the product of its necessary activity, or as existing independently alongside of itself. Again, the Absolute which is given in the intuition is one. It is infinite, not as comprehending in itself of necessity all beings, but as their ground and as incapable of any conceivable augmenting of its powers. It is free from all restrictions which are not self-imposed. Anything more respecting the Absolute is not here affirmed. It might be, as far as we have gone now, the universal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. ii. p. 426.

substance, the impersonal deity of Spinoza, or it might be "the Unknowable" of Spencer. For the rectifying of these hypotheses, we depend on other considerations.

The "arguments" for the being of God are usually classified as the ontological, the cosmological, and the teleological, or the argument of design. This last comprehends the evidences of design in Nature, together with the moral and historical arguments having a like probative value.

I. The ontological argument. This makes the existence of God involved in the idea of Him. This argument does not profess to appeal to the intuition of the Absolute which is evoked in conjunction with our perceptions of relative and dependent existence. The ontological proof begins and ends with the analysis of the idea. The proposition is that the fact of the existence of God is involved in the very idea. In the argument of Anselm, it is affirmed that the greatest (or the most perfect) *conceivable* being must be actual; otherwise, a property, that of actuality, or objective being, is lacking. To this it has been answered that existence *in re* is not a constituent of a concept. Anselm's contention was that it is not *mere* existence, but a *mode* of existence, a necessity of existence, that is the missing element in question. Still, it has been answered, the existence of a *thing* cannot be concluded from the definition of a *word*. In truth, that which Anselm presents in the shape of a syllogistic proof is really the rational intuition of Absolute Being.<sup>1</sup> From the mere idea, except on the basis of philosophical realism, a corresponding entity cannot be inferred.

Descartes alleges a double basis for our knowledge of the existence of God. The idea of an infinite self-conscious being is deduced from our own finite self-consciousness. That idea cannot be a product of the finite self. Its presence in the human mind can be accounted for, only by ascribing it to the Infinite Being himself. But, further, Descartes follows in the path of Anselm, and holds that the fact of the existence of God is involved in the definition of the Most Real Being, just as the equality of the three angles of a triangle is involved in the definition of a triangle. Here, moreover, the intuition of the Absolute is cast into the form of a proof.

Dr. Samuel Clarke's "demonstration" only establishes *a priori* the existence of a being eternal and necessarily existing. For of

<sup>1</sup> So it is interpreted by Harris, *The Self-Revelation of God*, p. 164.

the intelligence of this being the proof is *a posteriori*. Facts are adduced, — namely, the order and beauty perceived in the world, and the intelligence possessed by finite, human beings.<sup>1</sup>

There is cogency in what has been called the logical form of the *a priori* proof. It is adopted by Anselm and Aquinas. It is impossible to deny that there is Truth; the denial would be self-contradictory. But those ideas and truths which are the ground-work of all our knowing — the laws of our intellectual and moral constitution — have their source without us and beyond us. They inhere in God. A like indirect proof has been presented as follows. The human mind goes out of itself to know the world, and also, by exertions of the will, to mould and subdue it. Yet the world is independent of the mind that seeks thus to comprehend it and shape it to its purposes. This freedom of the mind implies that the world is intelligible, that there is thought in things. Although this proposition is denied by agnostics, yet it is tacitly admitted by them in all communications made from one to another. It implies that there is a common bond — namely, God, the Truth — between thoughts and things, mind and the world. Thought and thing, subject and object, each matched to the other, presuppose an intelligible ground of both. This presupposition is latent in all attempts to explore and comprehend, to bring within the domain of knowledge, and to shape to rational ends, the world without.

II. The cosmological proof. As usually stated, this proof is made to rest on the principle of causation. Whatever begins to be, owes its being to a cause not itself. The minor premise is that finite things begin to be. But this proposition, if it be admitted to be probably true, is not capable of full demonstration. The consequence is that we must fall back on the intuition of the Absolute Being. Here we find the origin and justification of the principle of causation. The hypothesis of an infinite series or regress, does not meet this demand. It is equivalent to saying that there is no cause, that the notion of cause is illusive. A phenomenon — call it *a* — calls for explanation; it demands a cause. If we are told that the cause of it is *b*, but told at the same time that in *b* there is no fount of causal energy, so that we have precisely the same demand to satisfy respecting *b* as respecting *a*, then no answer has been given to our *first* question: we are put off with an eva-

<sup>1</sup> See, on Clarke's argument, Dr. R. Flint, in *Encycl. Brit.* vol. ix. p. 110.



sion. That question takes for granted the reality of aboriginal causal energy. It proceeds from a demand of intelligence which is illegitimate and irrational, unless there be a cause in the absolute sense, — a cause uncaused.

The existence of an eternal being, the cause of the world, is verified. It is a reasonable judgment that the uncaused eternal being is a voluntary agent. For where do we get our idea of "cause?" For an answer to this question, we must look within. It is in the exercise of will alone that we become conscious of power, and arrive at the notion of causation. We act upon the world exterior to self, and consciously meet with resistance from without, which gives us the consciousness of external reality. It has been already explained that we have no direct knowledge of anything of the nature of cause, nor could we ever get such knowledge, except through this exercise of energy in voluntary action. The will influences intellectual states through attention, which is a voluntary act. We can fasten our observation on one thing, or one idea, in preference to another. The nascent self-activity which we style the exercise of the will belongs to the earliest development of the mind. It is doubtful whether distinct perception would be possible without a directing of the attention to one after another of the qualities of external objects, or at least without such a discrimination among the phenomena presented to the senses as involves the exercise of attention. Now, were it not for this consciousness of causal activity in ourselves, in our own wills, were we merely the subjects of utterly passive impressions from the world without, the conception of cause would be wanting.

Inasmuch as the only cause of which we are immediately conscious is will, it is the dictate of reason to refer the power which acts upon us from without to will as its source. The theory that "forces" inhere in nature, which are disconnected from the agency of will, is without warrant from ascertained truth in science. If it be supposed that plural agencies, separate or combined, do exist, even then analogy justifies the belief that they are dependent for their being and sustained activity on a Supreme Will. In this case, the precise mode of the connection of the primary and the subordinate agency is a mystery, as is true of the muscular movements of the human arm, so far as they originate and are kept up by volition. That the will of God is immanent and active in all



things, is a legitimate inference from what we know by experience of the nature of causation.

The polytheistic religions did not err in identifying the manifold activities of nature with voluntary agency. The spontaneous feelings of mankind in this particular are not belied by the principles of philosophy. The error of polytheism lies in the splintering of that Will which is immanent in all the operations of nature into a *plurality* of personal agents, a throng of divinities, each active and dominant chiefly within a province of its own.

How shall we confute polytheism? What warrant is there for asserting the *unity* of the Power that pervades nature?

In the first place, an example of such a unity is presented in the operation of our own wills. We put forth a multitude of volitions; we exert our voluntary agency in many different directions; this agency stretches over long periods of time; yet the same identical will is the source of all these effects. To attribute the sources of our passive impressions collectively to a single self without, as our personal exertions consciously emanate from a single self within, is natural and rational.

Secondly, what philosophers call the "law of parsimony" precludes us from assuming more causes to account for a given effect than are necessary. The One self-existent Being, known to us by intuition, suffices to account for the phenomena of nature. To postulate a plurality of such beings — were a plurality of self-existent beings metaphysically possible — would compel the conclusion that they are either in concord or in conflict.

Thirdly, the fact that nature is one coherent system proves that the operations of nature spring from one efficient Cause. The progress of scientific observation tends to show that the world is a cosmos. Science is constantly clearing away barriers which have been imagined to break up the visible universe into distinct and separate provinces. The word "universe" signifies unity. Men speak of the heavens and the earth; but the earth belongs in the starry system. The earth is a planet, and with its associate planets is one of countless similar groups, not alien from one another, but linked together in the stellar universe. Scientific theory more and more favors the reduction of "forces" to unity. The theory of the conservation of force is an illustration. The unity of the world testifies to the unity of God.

III. The argument of design. The personality of God is

proved by the argument of design. God is known to be intelligent and free by the manifest traces of purpose in the constitution of the world.

When we attend to the various objects, the human mind included, of which the knowing faculty takes cognizance, we discover something more than the properties which differentiate one from another and the causes which bring them into being.<sup>1</sup> In this very process of investigation we are struck with the fact that there is a coincidence and coöperation of what are named physical or efficient causes for the production of definite effects. These causes are perceived to be so constituted and disposed as to concur in the production of the effect, and — the elective preferences of the will excepted — to concur in such a way that the particular result regularly follows. This conjunction of disparate agencies, of which a definite product is the outcome, is the *finality* which is observed in Nature. But our observation extends farther. We involuntarily assume that this coincidence of causes is *in order that* the peculiar and specific result may follow. This assumption of design is not an arbitrary act on our part. It is spontaneous. The conviction is one inspired by the objects themselves. We see a thought realized, and recognize in it a forethought.

All must admit that the observation of order and adaptation in Nature, inspiring the conviction of a designing mind concerned in its origination, is natural to mankind. It has impressed alike the philosopher and the peasant. Socrates made use of the illustration of a statue, as Paley, two thousand years later, chose the illustration of a watch.

The proof from evidences of design is styled the argument from "final causes." In this expression, the term "final" refers to the end for which anything is made, as distinguished from what we style the mechanical causes concerned in its origination. The end is the purpose in view, and is so called because its manifestation is last in the order of time. Thus, a man purposes to build a house. He collects the materials, brings them into the proper shape, raises the walls, and, in short, does everything needful to carry out his intention. The *final* cause is seen in the com-

<sup>1</sup> Be it observed that we use the term "causes," in this connection, in the sense in which it is popularly taken, and without reference now to the question whether forces distinct from the agency of the divine will and resident in matter are to be regarded as real.

pleted dwelling for the habitation of his family. The final cause of a watch is to tell the time. The efficient causes are all the forces and agencies concerned in the making of it and in the regular movement of its parts.

It is a familiar fact that a thing may be an end, and, at the same time, a means to another end more remote. When a mechanic is making a spoke, it is the spoke which is the immediate end in view. But the end of the spoke is to connect the rim of the wheel with the hub. The end of the wheel is to revolve upon the axle; and the wagon is the end for which all its parts are fashioned and connected. The transporting of persons or things is a further end, ulterior but prior in the order of thought. There are subordinate ends and chief ends. We are not, therefore, to ignore the marks of design, even in cases where the chief end, the ultimate purpose, may be faintly perceived, or be quite in the dark.

It is sometimes said that "we cannot reason from the works of man to the works of nature." Why not? We are seeking to explain the origin of the scene that is spread before us in the world in which we live. Is the cause intelligent? We know what are the characteristic signs of intelligence. These signs are obvious in the world around us. The marks of design in nature reveal to us its intelligent author. For the same reason that we recognize an intelligent cause in countless products of human agency whose particular origin and authorship we know not, we infer an intelligent cause in things not made by man. In them we discern equal evidence of an end reached by the selection and combination of means adapted to accomplish it. If it is not a literal truth, it is far more than a fancy, when we say that they *conspire* to produce it.

This mode of reasoning is often considered an argument from analogy. We sometimes apply the term "analogy" to a merely figurative likeness which the imagination suggests; as when we speak of the "analogy" between a rushing stream and the rapid utterance of an excited orator. This is the diction of poetry. But when we have always found that certain properties in an animal are united with a given characteristic — for example, speed — we expect wherever we meet the same collection of properties, to find in their company this additional quality. This we look for with a certain degree of confidence even when no specific connection

between such properties and their associate has yet been detected. This is an argument from analogy.

J. S. Mill maintains that the argument of design is a genuine instance of inductive reasoning. "The design argument," says Mill, "is not drawn from mere resemblance in nature to the work of human intelligence, but from the special character of this resemblance. The circumstances in which it is alleged that the world resembles the works of man are not circumstances taken at random, but are particular instances of a circumstance which experience shows to have real connection with an intelligent origin, the fact of conspiring to an end. The argument, therefore, is not one of mere analogy. As mere analogy it has its weight, but it is more than analogy. It surpasses analogy exactly as induction surpasses it. It is an inductive argument."<sup>1</sup>

But the argument of design has an *a priori* basis and consequently is universal in its application. Induction itself, as a method of reasoning, presupposes what is termed the uniformity of nature, or an order of nature—an established association of observed antecedents and consequents. This conviction is not one of the intuitions constitutive of reason, and admitting of no possible or conceivable exception, but is a belief grounded on wide and long-continued experience, and thus serving as a "working postulate." But the idea of end or purpose as implied in all things and events, like the idea of what is termed efficient or physical or mechanical causation, has a strictly *a priori* origin. The idea of final purpose arises in our own experience in carrying out a desire by means chosen for this end. We are not less prompted to ask "what for" than to ask "how." Mechanism of itself explains nothing. The very term properly signifies means to an end. The world, if conceived of as only a vast mechanism, would be a fathomless mystery impervious to reason,<sup>2</sup> and not what it really is, the spectacle of forces realizing ideas. The objection that to attribute design to material things and to the world as a whole is *anthropomor-*

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion ; Theism*, pp. 169, 170.

<sup>2</sup> For a clear exposition and proof of the *a priori* basis of the idea of Design, see Ladd, *A Theory of Reality*, ch. xiv. See also, Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 3d ed., vol. ii. ch. ix., *Zweck*; Dorner, *System d. Christl. Glaubenslehre*, vol. i. pp. 252-257; N. Porter, *The Human Intellect*, pp. 592-619.



*phic*, has no real weight. It shares this character in company with the idea of mechanical causation. In each case the human mind finds its own rational constitution reflected and embodied in external reality.<sup>1</sup> Our knowledge of the world without consists in the projection of the categories in our mental processes into things without. It is undeniable that nature is a system, or proceeds according to a plan. The postulate of science is the rationality of nature. Science, in the words of Huxley, is "the discovery of the rational order that pervades the universe." Without this presupposition of a rational order, scientific investigation would be the pursuit of a chimera. Nature, it is taken for granted, is the embodiment of thoughts. All nature is but a book which science undertakes to decipher and read. When the student explores any department of Nature, it is to unveil its laws and adaptations.<sup>2</sup>

Because Nature is a rational system, it is adapted to our cognitive faculties. This correspondence proves that the author of the mind is the author of "the mind in Nature." What being, says Cicero, that is "destitute of intellect and reason could have produced these things which not only had need of reason to cause them to be, but *which are such as can be understood only by the highest exertions of reason?*"<sup>2</sup> What are the *laws* of Nature? They are a description of the observed and customary interaction of things. To hypostatize "Law," either in the singular or the plural, if more than a figure of speech is meant, is to set up a crude species of Nature-worship. Laws are the rules conformably to which the unitary power operative in Nature, or, if one pleases so to think, the multiple forces in Nature, act. We cannot think of them otherwise than as prescribed, as ordained to the end that they may work out their effects. In other words, the order of Nature is an arrangement of intelligence. This explains the joy that springs up in the mind on the discovery of some great law which gives simplicity to seemingly complex natural phenomena. Thought gains access to reality through their mutual affinity. The mind recognizes something akin to itself. It discovers a thought of God. The norms according to which the knowing faculty discriminates, connects, and classifies the objects in Nature, imply that Nature herself has been pre-

<sup>1</sup> What is deducible *a priori* by epistemological argument (see above, p. 18) can be shown inductively.

<sup>2</sup> *De Nat. Deorum*, ii. 44.

arranged according to the same norms, or is the product of mind. In conformity to the categories — time, space, quantity, quality, etc. — according to which the mind distinguishes natural objects, and thus comprehends Nature, Nature has been framed. That is to say, there is mind expressed in Nature.

Science is the statement of the expressions of thought and purpose which are incorporated in Nature. A dog sees on a printed page only meaningless marks on a white ground. To us they contain and convey ideas, and bring us into communion with the mind of the author. So it is with Nature. Take a book of astronomy. If the stellar world were not an intellectual system, such a work would be impossible. The sky itself is the book which the astronomer reads, and the written treatise is merely a transcript of the thoughts which he finds there. This truth is presented with much force and eloquence by one of the most eminent mathematicians of the age, the late Benjamin Pierce. He speaks of Nature as “imbued with intelligible thought,”<sup>1</sup> of “the amazing intellectuality inwrought into the unconscious material world,”<sup>2</sup> in which there is “no dark corner of hopeless obscurity,”<sup>3</sup> of the “dominion of intellectual order everywhere found,”<sup>4</sup> “of the vast intellectual conceptions in Nature.”<sup>5</sup> To ignore God as the author of Nature as well as of mind is as absurd as to make “the anthem the offspring of unconscious sound.”<sup>6</sup> “If the common origin of mind and matter is conceded to reside in the decree of a Creator, the identity ceases to be a mystery.”<sup>7</sup> Science is the reflex of mind in Nature. Nature is made up of interacting objects which constitute together one complete system.<sup>8</sup> Order reigns in Nature, and universal harmony. Hence all these separate objects must be so fashioned and managed that they shall conspire to sustain and promote, and not to convulse and subvert, the complex whole. It follows that the existence and preservation of the system are an end for the realizing of which the plurality of forces — if supposed to be plural — and their special activities are the means. That is, Nature in its totality exhibits design.

<sup>1</sup> Pierce, *Ideality in the Physical Sciences* (1883), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> It was a noble title of Cudworth, however ambitious it may sound: “The True Intellectual System of the Universe.”



The belief in design has been at the root of scientific discovery. It has suggested the hypotheses which investigation has verified. Such was the source of Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation. Harvey was led to find out the true system of the circulation of the blood by observing that in the channels through which the blood flows, one set of valves opens toward the heart, while another set opens in the opposite direction. He had faith in the *prudence* of nature.

Robert Boyle tells us : —

"I remember that when I asked our famous Harvey what were the things that induced him to think of the circulation of the blood, he answered me, that when he took notice of the valves in many parts of the body, so placed that they gave free passage to the blood toward the heart, but opposed to the passage of the venous blood the contrary way, he was invited to think that so prudent a cause as nature had not placed so many valves without a design, and no design seemed more probable than that, since the blood could not well, because of the intervening valves, be sent by the veins to the limits, it should be sent through the arteries, and returned through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way."

Kepler was moved to his discoveries by "an exalted faith, anterior and superior to all science, in the existence of intimate relations between the constitution of man's mind and that of God's firmament."<sup>1</sup> Such a faith is at the root of "the prophetic inspiration of the geometers," which the progress of observation verifies.

The distinction between order and design, in the popular sense of the term, — meaning special adaptations, — is a valid and important one. Especially is this discrimination to be borne in mind since the advent of the modern theories of evolution. By order we mean the reign of law and the harmony of the world resulting from it. Both order and the relation of means to special ends imply intelligent purpose. Both order and special adaptation may and do coexist, but they are distinguishable from one another. For example, the typical unity of animals of the vertebrate class, or their conformity in structure to a typical idea, is an example of order. The fitness of the foot for walking, the wing for flying, the fin for swimming, is an instance of special adaptation. In either case there is an immanence of ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Pierce, *Ideality in the Physical Sciences*, p. 17.

What is meant by the *explanation* of any object of nature? What is it to explain any particular organ in a living being? What is it but to define its end? There can be no explanation of an organism which does not presuppose adaptation. This is the meaning of *organism*: one whole composed of mutually dependent parts. Says Janet:—

“Laplace perceived that the simplest laws are the most likely to be true. But I do not see why it should be so on the supposition of an absolutely blind cause; for, after all, the inconceivable swiftness which the system of Ptolemy supposed has nothing physically impossible in it, and the complication of movements has nothing incompatible with the idea of a mechanical cause. Why, then, do we expect to find simple movements in nature, and speed in proportion, except because we instinctively attribute a sort of intelligence and choice to the First Cause?”

Janet does not consider the idea of design to be *a priori*. But this question, and the whole paragraph which we are quoting, imply it. He goes on to say:—

“Now, experience justifies this hypothesis; at least it did so with Copernicus and Galileo. It did so, according to Laplace, in the debate between Clairaut and Buffon; the latter maintaining against the former that the law of attraction remained the same at all distances. ‘This time,’ says Laplace, ‘the metaphysician was right as against the geometer.’”<sup>1</sup>

Teleology is evident in the structure of plants as truly as in the structure of animals. The development and growth, the forms and colors, the habits, of plants presuppose and reveal the idea which is directive of the energy operative in their production. Energy is not a substance. It is power dependent on guidance. The energy through which the tree, in defiance of inanimate forces, like gravitation, rises in the air, clothes itself in foliage and bears its proper fruit, until the antagonistic elements win the victory, and it yields to the verdict, “earth to earth,” carries out an idea inseparable from it. “However we resolve the problem as to the connection of mind and matter, it is unquestionably a simplification to infer that wherever a material system is organized for self-maintenance, growth, and reproduction, as an individual in touch with an environment, that system has a psychological as well as a material aspect.”<sup>2</sup> The supposition of an inher-

<sup>1</sup> *Final Causes*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i. p. 285. See, also, the context of this remark.

ent "mind-stuff" is self-contradictory and absurd, but not more absurd than the supposition of a mindless energy.

When the root of a tree is observed to strike a path through the sand in quest of moisture, the rustic gardener has been known to express his recognition of design and of an inward stimulus by saying that "the root sees what it needs." In the inorganic realm, teleology is less striking, and may not be in a form to excite attention. So the question as to mechanical causes may fail to suggest itself to the casual observer. But to the enlightened student, to the mineralogist, the geologist, the chemist, the manifestation of controlling ideas or ends is not thus obscure.<sup>1</sup> There are "sermons in stones." In the structure of the globe are revealed an historic rise and a progress from step to step.<sup>2</sup>

The evidences of controlling intelligence are peculiarly impressive in the organic kingdom. The very idea of an organism is that every part is at once means and end. Naturalists, whatever their opinion about final causes, cannot describe plants and animals without perpetually using language which implies intention as disclosed in their structure. "Biological facts cannot be known at all except in relation to some teleological conception."<sup>3</sup> The "provisions" of nature, the "purpose" of an organ, the "possession" of a part, "in order that" something may be done or averted, — such phraseology is not only common, it is well-nigh unavoidable. The very word "function" means the appropriate action or assigned part. No writer uses the language of teleology more spontaneously and abundantly than Darwin. Huxley speaks of "every part" of an organism "becoming gradually and slowly fashioned, as if there were an artificer at work in each of these complex structures." "Step by step," he tells us, "naturalists have come to the idea of a unity of plan, or conformity of construction, among animals which appeared at first sight to be extremely dissimilar."<sup>4</sup>

It is when we consider the human body in its relation to the mind, that the most vivid perception of design is awakened. To

<sup>1</sup> Striking illustrations of "God's plan" are presented in the *Lectures on Religion and Chemistry* by Prof. J. P. Cooke (1864). It is shown what mighty forces, so to speak, are leashed, as it were, in the atmosphere and its elements.

<sup>2</sup> For proofs of design in Beauty, see Newman Smyth's *Through Science to Faith*, ch. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Ladd, *Theory of Reality*, p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> Huxley, *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 319, 325.

one not fettered to the opinion that the mind is itself the product of organization, and every purpose which the mind forms a phenomenon of matter — a phenomenon as necessary in its origin as the motion of the lungs — that is, to every one who is conscious of being able to initiate action, the adaptation of his bodily organs to the service of his intelligence is obvious and striking. The hand bears more clearly marks of being designed, than the tools which the hand makes. The eye displays contrivance more impressively than the optical instruments which man can contrive and fashion for the eye to use. I distinguish myself from the eye, and from my body of which the eye is a part; and I know that the eye was made for me to see with. The end of its existence is apparent. It is what the word “eye” signifies. When we consider the adaptation of the sexes to one another, the physical and moral arrangements of Nature which result in the family, in the production and rearing of offspring; and when we contemplate the relation of the family to the state and the relation of the family and the state to the kingdom of God, where the ideas and affections developed in the family and in the state connect themselves with higher objects, the evidences of a preconceived plan seem irresistible.

It is objected that in all the works of man the efficient cause is distinct and separate from the object in which the end is realized. In Nature, we are told, the efficient cause operates from within, and appears to work out the end without conscious purpose. The forces of Nature, it is alleged, appear to produce the order and variety and beauty which we behold, of themselves, through no external compulsion, and at the same time without consciousness. In an organism the structure grows up, repairs itself, and perpetuates itself by reproduction; but, it is averred, the active force by which these ends are fulfilled is not in the least aware of what it is doing. Thus, it is contended, the analogy fails between the artificial products of human ingenuity and the works of Nature. It is a *blind* intelligence, it is said, performing works resembling those which man does, often less perfectly, with conscious design. Without here subjecting to scrutiny this supposition of multiple unintelligent forces in Nature, it is still indisputable that, if matter is “blind,” incapable of foreseeing the end to be attained, and of selecting appropriate means, it is necessary to connect it with the operation of an intelligent author and his present agency.

The accurate mathematics of the planetary bodies, the unerring path of the birds, the geometry of the bee, the seed-corn sending upward the blossoming and fruit-bearing stalk, excite a wonder, the secret of which is the evident inadequacy of any "blind" power to effect these marvels of intelligence and foresight.

A popular objection to the argument of design imputes to it the fallacy of confounding *use* with *forethought* or *intention*. Is not the eye for seeing? Yes, it is answered, that is its use or function; but this is not to say that it was *planned* for this use or function, for, when you affirm design, you go back to a mental act. The rejoinder is, that we are *driven* back to such a mental act, and thus to a designing intelligence. The relation of the constitution of the organ to the use irresistibly prompts the inference. The inference is no arbitrary fancy. Design is brought home to us, just as the relation of the structure of a telescope to its use would of itself compel us to attribute it to a contriving intelligence.

It is objected to the argument of design that what are styled adaptations are nothing but "the conditions of existence" of objects in nature. These conditions being what they are, the various objects in which design is supposed to be shown could not be different from what they are. For example, the bird is said to be adapted to the air through which it flies, and, it is said, could not exist but for the air in which its wings are moved. The objection is equivalent to an attempt to explain the objects of nature by mechanical agencies and conditions. If the existence of the bird were traceable to primitive atoms, it would follow that these are purposeful.

In truth we find *use* so related to *structure* that the thought of design springs up unbidden.

By clear-sighted naturalists who give large room for the potentiality of protoplasm and its plasticity under the conditions of environment, design is recognized as the means to a preconceived end. Function or future use is seen to be the formative idea which specializes organs, and determines structure. An acute naturalist thus writes upon sexual differences, one of the most impressive illustrations of design:—

"Instead of thus eliminating by degrees every trace of finality in sexuality, till we merge into merely mechanical results, is it not just as logical to say that the sexuality of mammalia and flowering plants was potentially visible in the conjugation of *monera* and *plasmodia*? and



that the 'sexual idea' has reigned throughout, function ever dominating structure, till the latter had conformed to the more complete function by becoming specialized more and more? Or, in the words of Janet, 'The agreement of several phenomena, bound together with a future determinate phenomenon, supposes a cause in which that future phenomenon is ideally represented; and the probability of the presumption increases with the complexity of the concordant phenomena and the number of relations which unite them to the final phenomena.'"<sup>1</sup>

The writer last named also observes :—

"Finality is certainly not destroyed, whether we believe organs to have been developed by evolution, or to have been created in some analogous manner to the fabrication of a steam-engine by man. For my own part, I still hold to the theory that *uses* cause *adaptations*, on the principle that *function precedes structure*. Thus as a graminivorous animal has its food already (so to say) cut up into slices in grass-blades, it does not require scissors to reduce it to small pieces in order to make a convenient mouthful. But a carnivorous animal has a large lump of flesh in the shape of a carcass. It requires to cut it up. The action of biting, in order to do this previous to masticating, has converted its teeth into scissor-like carnassials; and, as it can no longer masticate, it bolts the pieces whole. So, too, man would never have thought of making scissors, unless he had had something that he wanted to cut up. The parallel is complete; only in the one case it is spontaneously effected by the plasticity and adaptability of living matter, and in the other case it is artificially produced by the consciousness and skill of man." <sup>2</sup>

To revert once more to the human eye: it is an instrument employed by a rational being for a purpose, as he employs a telescope or a microscope. When we see how the eye is fitted to its use, we cannot resist the impression that it was *intended* for it. The *idea* of the organ we discern. As Whewell well puts it: "*We* have in our minds the idea of a final cause, and when we behold the eye, we see our idea exemplified. This idea then governed the construction of the eye, be its mechanical causes, the operative agencies that produced it what they may." "Nothing," says an able writer, "has been proved against final causes when organic effects have been reduced to their proximate causes and to their determining conditions. It will be said, for instance, that it is not wonderful that the heart contracts, since it is a muscle, and con-

<sup>1</sup> Janet, *Final Causes*, p. 55. "Final Causes," by Mr. George Henslow, in *Modern Review*, January, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Review*, *loc. cit.*, p. 66.



tractility is an essential property of muscles. But is it not evident that if nature wished to make a heart that contracts, it behooved to employ for this a contractile tissue, and would it not be very astonishing were it otherwise? Have we thereby explained the wonderful structure of the heart and the skilful mechanism shown in it? Muscular contractility explains the contraction of the heart; but this general property, which is common to all muscles, does not suffice to explain how or why the heart contracts in one way rather than another, why it has taken such a form and not such another. 'The peculiarity presented by the heart,' says M. Cl. Bernard, 'is that the muscular fibres are arranged in it so as to form a sort of bag, within which is found the liquid blood. The contraction of these fibres causes a diminution of the size of this bag, and consequently an expulsion, at least in part, of the liquid it contains. The arrangement of the valves gives to the expelled liquid the suitable direction.' Now the precise question which here occupies the thinker is, how it happens that Nature, employing a contractile tissue, has given it the *suitable* structure and arrangement, and how it rendered it fit for the special and capital function of the circulation."

"The elementary properties of the tissues are the necessary conditions of which Nature makes use to solve the problem, but they in no way explain how it has succeeded in solving it. Moreover, M. Cl. Bernard [a learned physiologist] does not decline the inevitable comparison of the organism with the works of human industry, and even often recurs to it, as, for instance, when he says; 'the heart is essentially a living *motor machine*, a *force-pump* destined to send into all the organs a liquid to nourish them. . . . At all degrees of the animal scale, the heart fulfils this function of *mechanical irrigation*.' . . . 'We may compare,' he says, 'the histological elements to the materials man employs to raise a monument. . . . No doubt, in order that a house may exist, the stones composing it must have the property of gravitation; but does this property explain how the stones form a house?'"<sup>1</sup>

It might be said of a locomotive that — the boiler of iron, with its capacity to hold water, being present, and the water being in it, and fire beneath it, and a chimney above for the smoke to escape, and pipes through which steam can pass connected with the boiler and wheels beneath on which the locomotive can roll — it is sufficiently explained. But the combination of these parts, in their

<sup>1</sup> Janet, *Final Causes*, pp. 129-131.

peculiar forms, and relation of the whole to that which the locomotive does, are things which the foregoing statement altogether fails to account for.

Kant has two criticisms on the argument of design. The first is, that it can go no farther than to prove an architect or framer of the world, not a creator of matter. But the special aim of the argument is to prove that the First Cause is intelligent. We will suppose for the moment that matter is such an entity as the criticism implies. The conclusion that the author of the wonderful order which is wrought in and through matter is also the author of matter itself still appears probable. For how can the properties of matter through which it is adapted to the use of being moulded by intelligence, be separated from matter itself? What is matter divorced from its properties? We cannot understand creation, because we cannot create. The nearest approach to creative activity is in the production of good and evil by our own voluntary action. *How* God creates is a mystery which cannot be fathomed, at least until we know better what matter is. Philosophers of high repute so far favor hypotheses akin to the Berkeleian, as to dispense with a substratum of matter, and to ascribe the percepts of sense to the continuous action of the will of the Almighty. Whatever matter may be in its essence, we know that there is an ultimate, unconditioned cause. We know that this cause is intelligent and free. To suppose that by the side of the eternal Spirit there is another eternal and self-existent being, the raw matter of the world, "without form and void," involves the absurdity of two Absolutes limiting each other.

The second difficulty raised by Kant is, that the existence of a strictly infinite being cannot be demonstrated from a finite creation, however extensive or wondrous. All that can be inferred demonstratively is inconceivably vast power and wisdom. The validity of this objection may be conceded. The infinitude of the attributes of God is involved in the intuition of an unconditioned being, — the being glimpses of whose attributes are disclosed to us in the order of the finite world.

These objections of Kant are in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Elsewhere he brings forward an additional consideration. Admitting that the idea of design is essential to our comprehension of the world, he raises the point that it may be subjective only, regulative of our perceptions, but not objective or "constitutive."

Not regarding the idea of design as *a priori*, like the idea of causation, he inquires whether it may not be a mere supposition, a working hypothesis, which a deeper penetration of Nature might dispense with. It is a sufficient answer to this scepticism that the thought of design is not artificially originated by ourselves; it is a conviction which the objects of Nature themselves "imperiously" suggest and bring home to us. As Janet and other critics of Kant have pointed out, there are two classes of hypotheses. Of one class it is true that they are regarded as corresponding with the true nature of things; of the other, that they are only a convenient means for the mind to conceive them. The question is, whether an hypothesis is warranted by the facts, and is perceived veritably to represent Nature. In the proportion in which it does this, its verity acquires fresh corroboration. Of this character is the hypothesis of design.

We infer the existence of an intelligent Deity, as we infer the existence of intelligence in our fellow-men, and on grounds not less reasonable.

"We are spirits clad in veils,  
Man by man was never seen;  
All our deep communing fails  
To remove the shadowy screen."

My senses take no cognizance of the minds of other men. I perceive certain motions of their bodies. I hear certain sounds proceeding from their lips. What right have I, from these purely physical phenomena, to infer the presence of an intelligence behind them? What proof is there of the consciousness in the friend at my side? How can I be assured that he is not a mere automaton, totally unconscious of its own movements? The warrant for the contrary inference lies in the fact, that being possessed of consciousness, and acquainted with its effects in myself, I regard like effects as evidence of the same principle in others. But in this inference I transcend the limits of sense and physical experiment. In truth, in admitting the reality of consciousness in myself, I take a step which no physical observation can justify. Were the brain opened to view, no microscope, were its power immeasurably augmented, could discover the least trace of it.

The alternative of design is chance. The Epicurean theory, as expounded by the Roman poet Lucretius, made the world the re-

sult of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, which in their motions and concussions, at length fell into the orderly forms in which they abide.<sup>1</sup> The term "chance" does not denote the absence of cause—which would be an absurd supposition. The terms "chance" and "accident" are applied to events undesigned and unforeseen.

We use these words to denote an occurrence, or an object the particular cause of which is not detected, and which bears in it evident marks of forethought. I drop a handful of coins on the floor. They fly in different directions, and the directions in which they fly, we say, are due to chance. On the theory which we are considering, the world is accounted for as the final result of what is equivalent to an almost infinite succession of throws of dice. This cannot be said to be literally impossible, as it is not literally impossible that a font of types thrown into the air should come down in the form of Homer's Iliad. It is, however, so unlikely an occurrence as to be next to impossible. Imagine time to be given for the repetition of the experiment billions of times—the unlikelihood of the issue is not perceptibly diminished. Cicero, commenting on this theory of the Epicureans, after speaking of the vast orderly system of things beheld above us and around us, exclaims: "Is it possible for any man to behold these things, and yet imagine that certain solid and individual bodies move by their natural force and gravitation, and that a world so beautifully adorned was made by their fortuitous concourse? He who believes this may as well believe that if a great quantity of the one-and-twenty letters—" the number of the letters in the Roman alphabet—"composed of gold or of any other matter, were thrown upon the ground, they would fall into such order as legibly to form the Annals of Ennius. . . . If a concourse of atoms can make a world, why not a porch, a temple, a house, a city, which are works of less labor and difficulty?"<sup>2</sup> But assume that the order of the universe is possible. The question is not whether it is possible, but whether it is possible without an intelligent cause. The Strasburg Minster is possible, but not possible without an architect and builder.

If we accept the Lucretian hypothesis of the origin of the material universe, as we behold it, from the movements of atoms after countless myriads of chaotic combinations, we do not get rid of

<sup>1</sup> *De Rerum Natura*, i. 1021-1028.

<sup>2</sup> *De Nat. Deorum*, ii. 37.

the proof of design. Why did the multitudinous atoms fail to combine in an orderly and stable way up to the moment when the existing cosmos was reached? Manifestly they must have been, in their constitution and mutual relations, *adapted* to constitute the present structure of things, and no other. The present system was anticipated in the very make of the atoms, the constituent elements of the universe. The atoms, then, present the same evidences of design which the outcome of their revolutions presents. We might be at a loss to explain why the Author of Nature chose this circuitous way to the goal; but that the goal was in view from the beginning is evident. The difficulty of getting rid of the evidence of final cause is illustrated in the circumstance that Haeckel actually attributes to *atoms* desire and aversion, or a soul both sentient and volitional! <sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of evolution plays so conspicuous a part in the later discussions of Theism, that, at the risk of some repetition, it is worth while to examine critically its bearing on teleology. This doctrine undertakes to explain the diversity of animal species without resort to special acts of creation. As propounded by Darwin, it refers the origin of species to descent from a few progenitors, the origin of whom, in his work on this subject, he abstains from discussing. Some would extend evolutionary theory so far as to make life itself a development from inorganic forms, a view which thus far lacks support from scientific observation or experiment. In its widest extension, the network of evolutionary production is stretched over all things, living and lifeless, as far back as a nebulous vapor. Of those who believe in a genetic connection of animal organisms, some hold to "heterogenetic generation," the production of new species by leaps, or by the metamorphosis of germs. Darwin's theory is that of unbroken development through minute variations. The law of heredity, under which like produces like, does not exclude in offspring slight variations without number. Darwin conceded that some inheritable variations might be produced by the conditions of the environment, but he maintained that, were variations perfectly indefinite in direction, his explanation of the origin of species would be tenable. The three causes in operation are the ten-

<sup>1</sup> See the passage, with comments, in J. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. B. ii. Br. i. § 6, 2d ed. p. 399; also his *Study of Religion*, vol. i. p. 202.



dency of offspring to reproduce the forms of immediate or more or less remote ancestors, which Huxley denominates *Atavism*, the check on this tendency by a certain tendency to variation, and an influence from external conditions, such, for example, as climate.<sup>1</sup> Among innumerable variations in structure, some are of such a nature as to give an advantage in the struggle for food and, generally speaking, in the struggle for existence. There ensues—in the phrase suggested by Spencer—"the survival of the fittest." As the effect of mating and propagation, these profitable variations grow, thereby imparting increased power, and lines of demarcation are created and perpetuated. Thus, in inconceivably long periods, definite and stable species arise. The process is called "natural selection," being analogous to the course pursued in artificial breeding. The final effect of this kind of snail-like advance through countless millenniums appears at last in the production of the human species. Another agency besides that of the struggle for existence, that of sexual preference, is a factor in working out the actual results of natural selection.

The Darwinian doctrine, properly defined, lends additional strength to the argument of design. It brings before us a comprehensive system, which advances from the lowest forms of animal life until the terminus is reached in man. To quote the words of an eminent physiologist, Dr. W. B. Carpenter:—

"The evidence of final causes is not impaired. 'We simply,' to use the language of Whewell, 'transfer the notion of design and end from the region of facts to that of laws;' that is, from the particular cases to the general plan. In this general plan the production of man is comprehended."

At the same time, evolutionary theory does not annul the evidence of adaptation in particular instances—in the eye, for example—when regarded in its place and function in the human body, as the organ of vision. This function is so clear and undeniable that, whatever opinion may be held of the nature of perception as a mental act, to withstand the proof of intention in the structure of this organ of vision is well-nigh impossible. Had Paley claimed for the principle of design an *a priori* basis and a universal application, it would have been well. Critics of Paley, however, seem often to forget that he devotes a whole

<sup>1</sup>Huxley, *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 397-403.

chapter (ch. ii.) to maintaining his ground on the supposition that the watch had the property of producing in the course of its movement another watch like itself. But the countless particular instances in Nature, when seen in their connection and place in the entire system, give to the proof of foresight and plan a redoubled force. Besides the single pillar, however exquisitely carved, we behold its relation to the vast edifice in which it has a fitting place. The system of animate beings has been likened to the cathedral of St. Mark, which owes its greatness "to the patient hands of centuries and centuries of workers," and is built up from materials drawn from every quarter of the globe. After this analogy, the lower forms of animal life have contributed to the upbuilding of the human body. Even foreshadowings of mind antedate that stage of being wherein man, with his introspective vision and gift of language, is differentiated from the animal species beneath him. But man, erect in form, with reason enabling him to comprehend Nature, to know himself and the world of which he is a part, and with conscience and the capacity of religion — man is the goal to which Nature from the outset points. Now, when man appears, an end is put to the gradations of physical development. There is "an arrest of the body" ; for by means of his intelligence man fashions tools and instruments of every sort which enable him to do without additional and more complex physical organs. He can interchange thoughts with his fellows. He dominates the forces of material Nature. Henceforth, evolution is psychical. It is the story of the rise and of the stages in the progress of human civilization. The prolonging of the period of helpless infancy is an essential condition of the evolution of motherhood. The permanent relation of husband and wife is dependent on physical characteristics which do not belong to the lower types of animal life. The being of the family, with the ties of affection developed within it, as well as the possibility of handing down a fund of knowledge to increase from generation to generation, are consequent on the birth of humanity with its distinctive peculiarities. These were foreshadowed before, but never brought into being. A loftier stimulus than the struggle for existence — namely, altruism, a benevolent interest in others, and the spirit of self-sacrifice for their sake — sets bounds to self-love.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a more full statement of these particular features in the course of Evolution, see Drummond, *The Ascent of Man*, especially chs. iii. vii.

As to the agencies instrumental in building up the system of nature, it is plain that, in the first place, the origin of each requires to be explained; in the second place, that their concurrence requires to be accounted for; and, in the third place, that neither separately considered nor taken in combination—regarded as blind, unintelligent forces—do they avail in the least to explain the order and adaptation of Nature which result from them. Why do living beings engender offspring like themselves? Why do the offspring slightly vary from the parents and from one another? How account for the desire of food? How explain the disposition to struggle to obtain it? Why is beauty preferred, leading to “sexual selection”? How is it that these laws coexist and co-operate? We see that they issue, according to the Darwinian view, in a grand result, a *system* of living beings. They are actually means to an intelligible end. They appear to exist, to be ordained and established, with reference to it. There is a “survival of the fittest.” Who are the “fittest” except those who have been *fitted* to a given end? But how were “the fittest” produced? Natural selection merely weeds out and destroys the products which are not the fittest. It produces nothing. But it operates, in conjunction with the force described as “heredity,” which includes “variability,” to work out an order of things which plainly shows itself to have been preconceived. The selection, as far as it is positive, is dictated by *stimuli* within the organism. The fallacy of excluding design or final causes where it is possible to trace out efficient or instrumental causes would be astonishing if it were not so frequently met with.

There is nothing in gradualness of development to disprove teleology. The progress of a pedestrian to a place a mile distant, by steps an inch long, presupposes volition and purpose as truly as if he had reached the place at a single bound. So it is with the continuity ascribed to Nature by the evolutionist. It were to be wished that all naturalists were as discriminating as Professor Owen, who says:—

“Natural evolution by means of slow physical and organic operations through long ages is not the less clearly recognizable as the act of all-adaptive mind, because we have abandoned the old error of supposing it to be the result of a primary, direct, and sudden act of creational construction. . . . The succession of species by continuously operating law is not necessarily a ‘blind operation.’ Such law, however discerned

in the properties of natural objects, intimates, nevertheless, a preconceived progress. Organisms may be evolved in orderly manner, stage after stage, towards a foreseen goal, and the broad features of the course may still show the unmistakable impress of divine volition." <sup>1</sup>

Evolution has to do with the *how*, and not the *why*, of phenomena. Evolution is a method, not an agent. Hence the evolutionist is powerless against the teleological argument. This is true of the theory of evolution in the widest stretch that the boldest speculation has given it. This is conceded, even if not consistently, by its considerate advocates. This harmony of evolution with design is not denied by Huxley: —

"The teleological and the mechanical views of nature are not necessarily mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the more purely a mechanist the speculator is, the more firmly does he affirm primordial nebular arrangement, of which all the phenomena of the universe are consequences, the more completely is he thereby at the mercy of the teleologist, who can always defy him to disprove that this primordial nebular arrangement was not intended to evolve the phenomena of the universe." <sup>2</sup>

This intention is recognized in the outcome as related to the concurrent agencies leading to it, as well as in the constitution of these primordial agencies, — recognized by the same faculty of reason through which we are made capable of tracing phenomena to their physical causes. The antecedent idea is throughout controlling.

Darwin himself was often impressed by the marks of design in the development of animal life, but he confessed to a perplexity and consequent scepticism on this point from the circumstance that the phenomena of variation seemed to him to be due to "chance." "This," as he explained later, "is a wholly incorrect expression, which simply indicates an ignorance of the cause of each particular variation." <sup>3</sup> He was puzzled by what he conceived to be the fact that variability shows nothing like adaptation to the prospective function of natural selection. Variability appeared to him to be,

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Geological Society*, vol. v. p. 90, quoted by Mivart, *The Genesis of Species*, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Huxley, *Critiques*, p. 307. For other passages from Huxley, one in a less philosophical spirit, see Appendix, Note 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Origin of Species*, vol. i. p. 137, vol. ii. p. 431.

figuratively speaking, haphazard. The materials for natural selection to do its work with, he compared to the numerous fragments of stone, of all shapes and sizes, which might be produced by the breaking up of a precipice by natural forces, including storm and earthquake. The builder picks out from the chaotic heap such fragments as he can work into the structure of his edifice. Hence to Darwin there seemed to be an antinomy, an irreconcilable contradiction<sup>1</sup>—like what he conceived to exist between free-will and foreknowledge. He has no thought of denying that there are *laws* of variation. "Our ignorance," he says, "of the laws of variation is profound."<sup>2</sup> But what they are, what the causes of variation in plants and animals are, is a problem which he left unsolved.<sup>3</sup> "Darwin," says Huxley, "left the causes of variation, and whether it is limited or directed by extended conditions, perfectly open. But in the immediate consequences of variability, he could not perceive marks of design, but rather the opposite. In other words, he missed a link in the process of rational development; there seemed to be a vacancy—a place where foresight and plan are suspended, and control is left to chance."<sup>4</sup> Be this as it may, the organism and the conditions in which it lives, work out a result which exhibits clearly

<sup>1</sup> *Animals and Plants under Domestication*, vol. ii. p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> The impressions of Darwin are avowed with his wonted candor, especially in his correspondence with Asa Gray. Darwin's letters are in vol. ii. of *The Life of Darwin*. He speaks of "undesigned variability" (ii. 165), from which no definite results would follow. "I am conscious," he writes, "that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world as we see it, is the result of chance, and yet I cannot look upon each separate thing as the result of Design" (ii. 146). He writes in an earlier letter: "I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this *at all* satisfies me" (ii. 105). He would have no doubt of design if he could "thoroughly" believe that there is any other "imponderable force" of which life and mind are the "function"; that is to say, if he could believe that there is a designer—distinct from mechanical forces active in natural selection—for the designing of things to be assigned to (ii. 170). But "the forces active in natural selection," that is, in living organisms and their environment, collectively taken, issue in the distinct species of animal and vegetable life. In this product a rationality is to be discerned which implies that intention is involved in the existence and activity of the agencies, collectively taken, on which it depends. <sup>3</sup> See, respecting Darwin's views, Appendix, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Huxley's Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 205; also, his article on "Mr. Darwin's Critics," *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. p. 120. For the advance of the theory of evolution, he says, the great need is a theory of variation. *Ibid.*, p. 182.



a designing agent. There is no room for denial that, as Mr. Sully expresses it, "every doctrine of evolution must assume some definite initial arrangement which is supposed to contain the possibilities of the order which we find to be evolved, and no other possibility. This undeniable truth subverts every hypothesis which would substitute chance for design."

But there is too much dissent from the supposition of limitless variability to reason upon it as a basis for scientific argument.

Out of variations, says one critic, there must appear individual peculiarities adapted to give success in the struggle for existence. Then, in "this ocean of fluctuation and metaphorphosis," variations coinciding with these must appear, from generation to generation, to join on to them and to build up a highly organized species. The series of chances required to be overcome is infinite. If this were not the fact, the physiologist, Dr. W. B. Carpenter argues, the chances to be overcome in building up an organized species are infinite. "On the hypothesis of 'natural selection' among aimless variations," says Dr. Carpenter, "I think that it could be shown that the probability is infinitely small that the progressive modifications required in the structure of each individual organ to convert a reptile into a bird could have taken place without disturbing the required harmony in their combined action; nothing but intentional variations being competent to bring such a result." The proof of this prearrangement is furnished "by the orderly sequence of variations following definite lines of advance. It would be necessary to presuppose a miracle of luck. There is not, as in artificial breeding, a seclusion of favored offspring from their kin. Moreover, mere selection on the basis of aimless variability will not account for organs and members, which, however useful when fully grown, in their beginnings do not help, and may hinder the animal in its struggle for existence. From the geological record, which, to be sure, is defective, support cannot be drawn for the theory." Professor Huxley himself suggests that "further inquiries may prove that variability is definite, and is determined in certain directions rather than others. It is quite conceivable that every species tends to produce varieties of a limited number and kind, and that the effect of natural selection is to favor the development of some of these, while it opposes the development of others, along their predetermined lines of modification."<sup>1</sup> The response of the organism to exterior influences is determined by impulses within itself. This is the teaching of eminent naturalists, such as Owen and Virchow. Dana held that variation is limited by "fundamental laws." Gray, an able advocate of Darwin's general theory, teaches that "variations"—in other words, "the

<sup>1</sup> *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. viii. p. 751, art. "Evolution."

differences between plants and animals — are evidently not from without, but from within: not physical, but physiological." The occult power "does not act vaguely, producing all sorts of variations from a common centre," etc. "The facts, so far as I can judge, do not support the assumption of every-sided and indifferent variation. Variation is somehow and somewhere introduced in the transit from parent to offspring. . . . It is generally agreed that the variation is from within, is an internal response to external impressions. All that we can possibly know of the nature of the inherent tendency to vary must be gathered from the facts of the response. And these, I judge, are not such as to require or support the assumption of a tendency to wholly vague and all-directioned variation."<sup>1</sup> He affirms, that "as species do not now vary at all times and places, and in all directions, nor produce crude, vague, imperfect, and useless forms, there is no reason for supposing that they ever did."<sup>2</sup> The philosopher Von Hartmann ingeniously compares natural selection to the bolt and coupling in a machine, but affirms that "the driving principle," which called new species into existence, lay or originated in the organisms.<sup>3</sup> Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, frankly allowed that he has exaggerated natural selection as a cause, since it fails to account for structures which are neither beneficial nor injurious. Here, as in regard to the correlation of parts and organs, or "sympathetic" variation, he falls back on mystery. The fact of the sterility of hybrids has no explanation. In both cases, teleology cannot be dispensed with.

The upshot of the matter is, that there is no occasion for puzzling over the design of chaotic and purposeless variations, — the stones of all shapes at the base of the precipice, — until a final verdict of natural science has been reached. Be the conclusion on this point what it may, the effects of variation must be considered an actual link in the series of causes, the outcome of which is an orderly and beautiful system of organized beings.

Were there such a thing in nature as "aimless variability," the objection to the theistic argument, suggested by it, would be akin to the objection sometimes heard "from the waste of life and material" in organic nature, where the phenomena in question are familiar. In parts of both the vegetable and animal kingdoms,

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Science and Religion*, p. 50. So stout an advocate of Darwinian doctrine as Huxley remarks concerning the effect of external conditions, climate, etc., on variations, "In all probability the influence of this cause has been very much exaggerated." *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Darwiniana*, pp. 386, 387.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Schmid, *The Theories of Darwin*, etc., p. 107.

we find a redundancy of germs and eggs. Blossoms numberless bear no fruit. Facts of this sort do not militate against the proof of design. The only doubt which they could inspire, must relate to the *perfection* of wisdom and skill in the Creator. It might be answered that the very notion of wastefulness involves the *needless* and *useless* sacrifice of that which is at the same time possessed of value, and provided not without cost of money or labor. If all the difficulty connected by Darwin with variability existed, it would be well to bear in mind an observation of Huxley: "There is a wide gulf between the thing you cannot explain and the thing that upsets you altogether. There is hardly any hypothesis in this world which has not some fact in connection with it, which has not been explained."<sup>1</sup> Gray presents from his own science of botany illustrations of usefulness in this "waste of life and material." One of them is afforded by the different means of dispersing the pollen of flowers.<sup>2</sup> Darwin's own writings, one of which is entitled *On the Contrivances in Nature for the Fertilization of Orchids*, are quite helpful in this same direction. The Darwinian hypothesis, in its essential principle, goes far toward disposing of the sceptical difficulties of the kind referred to. This is through what has been denominated "the comprehensive and far-reaching teleology," by which "organs and even faculties, useless to the individual, find their explanation and reason of being."

Before closing this discussion, it is expedient to notice briefly a few not uncommon misconceptions of the argument of design, to which its advocates as well as dissentients are exposed. A fruitful error is the failure to perceive that a multitude of things in Nature which, regarded individually, might be judged to be unwise and even baneful, are incidental to a system of general laws, the existence of which is in the highest degree expedient. The law of heredity brings in its train numerous evils, yet it is, on the whole, an essential benefit.

A conclusion unfavorable to the skill or to the benevolence of the architect of the world, is frequently based on the absence of what is deemed an ideal perfection in some part of Nature—it may be an organ in the human body. Thus a justly distinguished naturalist, Helmholtz, criticises the structure of the human eye, contrasting it with certain optical instruments of human invention. Yet he closes with a statement which is the main point in the

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *Collected Essays*, vol. ii. p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> *Darwiniana*, pp. 375 seq.

argument of design: "*The adaptation of the eye to its function is, therefore, most complete, and is seen in the very limits set to its defects. Here, the result which may be reached by innumerable generations working under the Darwinian law of inheritance, coincides with what the wisest wisdom may have devised beforehand.*"<sup>1</sup> It has often been taken for granted by theologians, or wrongly assumed to be their contention, that the world and everything in it was designed *exclusively* as a manifestation of the Creator to the human race. Hence everything not capable of this limited construction has been looked upon as, to say the least, superfluous. A lesson of modesty is contained in the familiar lines of Gray: —

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear,  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Every gem and every blossom manifests in its very structure a purpose, even without reference to the impression it is adapted to make on human observers. But one of the motives of their creation may be the self-expression, for its own sake, of the Author of their being.<sup>2</sup> Still further, the partial if not complete hypothesis has been virtually sanctioned that everything in the broad realm of nature was fashioned as an instrument to convey a specific benefit, larger or smaller, to the race of man, or to a portion of it. It is one thing to say that in innumerable arrangements the benevolence of God is convincingly discovered. But to affirm this of every being and thing, simply leads to the caricature of the true view. To call in the idea of a distinct purpose, to account for the creation of whatever the convenience of man, aided by his ingenuity, may turn to some use, argues either impiety or ignorance. Especially presumptuous and misleading is the implied omniscience which professes to comprehend in full the final end of creation and providence, and to derive thence an infallible criterion for setting the right value on whatever is and whatever occurs. Apart from

<sup>1</sup> See the comments of J. Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. ii. B. ii. c. i. p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Quite apart from peculiar adjuncts in his system, one may recognize truth in Professor Royce's emphatic words on what he calls the "Philistinism" "which supposes that Nature has no worthier goal than producing a man. Perhaps experiences of longer time-span are far higher in rational type than ours." *The World and the Individual*, p. 231.



revealed truth, it is clear enough that "we know in part" and are incompetent otherwise to apprehend

"the one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves."

It is conceded that the argument of design does not *demonstrate* the infinitude of God's power and wisdom. It is here that the ontological argument, or that which is the real gist of it, the intuition of the Infinite and Absolute, comes in to convert into a conviction the feeling that is begotten in the mind, in the form of an immediate suggestion by the inconceivably vast manifestation of these attributes of God in the universe, as far as our human vision can extend. The unconditioned being is independent of limitations inseparable from finite beings. The intuition of unconditioned being involves the infinitude of his natural attributes. He is independent of temporal limitations; that is, he is eternal. He is independent of spatial limitations; that is, he is omnipresent. The categories of space and time cannot be applied to him, — a truth which we can only express by saying that he is *above* time and space. His power is infinite; that is, it can do everything which is an object of power, and it admits of no imaginable increase. His knowledge, since final causes reveal his personality, is equally without limit.

IV. The moral argument. The righteousness and goodness of God are evident from conscience. The phenomena, which have been shown to be the immediate source of faith in God,<sup>1</sup> on reflection are seen to be valid in logic. Right is the supreme, sole authoritative impulse in the soul. He who planted it there, and gave it this imperative character, must himself be righteous. From the testimony of "the vicegerent within the heart" we infer "the righteousness of the Sovereign who placed it there."

But what are the contents of the law? What has he bidden man, by "the law written on the heart," to be and to do? He has enjoined goodness. When we discover that the precept of the unwritten law of conscience is love, we have the clearest and most undeniable evidence that love is the preference of the Law-giver, and that he is love.

The argument from conscience is really a branch of the argu-

<sup>1</sup> See ch. i.



ment from final causes. In this inward law there is revealed the end of our being,—an end not to be realized as if a part of physical nature, but freely. We are to make ourselves what our Maker designed us to be. The law is the ideal, the thought of the Creator, and a spur to its realization. It attests the holiness of God, as design in the external world reveals His intelligence. This truth is forcibly expressed by Erskine of Linlathen: “When I attentively consider what is going on in my conscience, the chief thing forced on my notice is, that I find myself face to face with a purpose—not my own, for I am often conscious of resisting it, but which dominates me, and makes itself felt as ever present, as the very root and reason of my being.” “This consciousness of a purpose concerning me that I should be a good man—right, true, and unselfish—is the first firm footing I have in the region of religious thought; for I cannot dissociate the idea of a purpose from that of a purposer; and I cannot but identify this Purposer with the Author of my being and the being of all beings, and further, I cannot but regard his purpose toward me as the unmistakable indication of his own character.”<sup>1</sup>

Is this conviction, which the very constitution of our being compels us to cherish, contradicted by the course of the world? There is moral evil in the world. But of moral evil, although He permits it, He is not the author. Nor can this permission be pronounced unrighteous or unbenevolent, until it is proved that there are no incompatibilities between the most beneficent system of created things, including beings endowed, to the extent with which men are endowed, with free agency, and the exclusion, by direct power, of all abuse of that divine gift by which man resembles his Creator. *Permission on this ground is not to be confounded with preference of moral evil to its opposite.* If it were made probable that the bare permission of moral evil, so far as it actually exists in the world, is inconsistent with infinite power and infinite goodness, or with both, the result would simply be a contradiction between the revelation of God in our intuition of unconditioned being and in our own moral nature, and the disclosure of Him in the course of the world.<sup>2</sup>

We are in a world that abounds in suffering. How shall this be reconciled with benevolence in the Creator? Much weight

<sup>1</sup> *The Spiritual Order and Other Papers*, pp. 47, 48. <sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note 4.

is to be given to the consideration of the effects flowing of necessity from a system of general laws, notwithstanding the advantages of such a system. The suggestions relative to the occasions and beneficent offices of pain and death, which are presented by such writers as James Martineau, in his work entitled *A Study of Religion*, are helpful. Especially is the fact of moral evil to be taken into the account when a solution is sought for the problem of physical evil, its concomitant and so often its consequence. Let it be freely granted, however, that no explanations that man can devise avail to clear up altogether the mystery of evil. It is only a small part of the system of things that falls under our observation in the present stage of our being. It is not by an inductive argument, by showing a preponderance of good over evil in the arrangements of nature, that the mind is set at rest. There is no need of an argument of this kind. There is need of faith, but that faith is rational. We find, as we have pointed out, in our own moral constitution a direct and full attestation of the goodness of God. Our moral constitution is affirmed, by a class of evolutionists, to be a gradual growth from a foundation of animal instincts. Let this speculation go for what it may be worth. The same theory is advanced respecting the human intellect. Yet the intellect is assumed to be an organ of knowledge. There is no avoiding this conclusion, else all science, evolutionary science included, is a castle in the air. If the intellect is entitled to trust, so equally is the moral nature. Are the righteousness and goodness of God called in question on the ground of perplexing facts observed in the structure and course of the world? Where do we get the qualifications for raising such inquiries or rendering an answer to them? It must be from ideals of character which we find within ourselves, and from the supreme place accorded to the moral law which is written on the heart. But whence come these moral ideals? Who enthroned the law of righteousness in the heart? Who inscribed on the tablets of the soul the assertion of the inviolable authority of right and the absolute worth of love as a motive of action? In a word, our moral constitution is itself given us of God, and if it be not the reflection of His character, it is, for aught we can say, a false light; in which case all the verdicts resting upon it, with all the queries of scepticism as to the goodness of God, may be illusive. The arraignment of the character of God on the ground of alleged imperfections in nature or

of seemingly harsh or unjust occurrences in the course of events, is therefore suicidal. The revelation of God's character is in our moral constitution. The voice within us, which is uttered in the sacred impulse of duty and in the law of love, is His voice. There we learn what He approves, what He requires, what He rewards. When this proposition is denied, we lose our footing; we cut away the ground for trust in our own capacity for moral criticism.

Man has not one originating cause and the world another. The existence and supreme authority of conscience imply that in the on-going of the world righteousness holds sway. If there is a moral purpose underlying the course of things, then a righteous Being is at the helm. What confusion worse than chaos in the idea that while man himself is bound to be actuated by a moral purpose, the universe in which he is to act his part exists for no moral end, and that through the course of things no moral purpose runs!

Even Kant, who bases our conviction as to the fundamental truths of religion on moral grounds, and asserts for it, not a strictly logical, but a moral, certainty, nevertheless declares this conviction to be inevitable where there exist right moral dispositions. "The only caution to be observed," he says, "is that this faith of the intellect (*Vernunftglaube*) is founded on the assumption of moral tempers." If one were utterly indifferent to moral laws, even then the conclusion "would still be supported indeed by strong arguments from analogy, but not by such as an obstinate sceptical bent might not overcome."

It is not my object in these remarks to draw out in full the proofs of the existence and the moral attributes of God. It is rather to illustrate the relation in which these proofs stand to those perceptions, inchoate and spontaneous in the experiences of the soul, which are the ultimate subjective source of religion, and on which the living appreciation of the revelation of God in external nature is contingent. Let it be observed, moreover, that these native spiritual experiences of dependence, of obligation and accountableness, of hunger for fellowship with the Infinite One, wherein religion takes its rise and has its root, are themselves to be counted as proofs of the reality of the object implied in them. They are significant of the end for which man was made. They presuppose God.

It is true that all our knowledge rests ultimately on an act of

faith which finds no warrant in any process of reasoning. We cannot climb to this trust on the steps of a syllogism. We are obliged to start with a confidence in the veracity of our intellectual faculties; and this we have to assume persistently in the whole work of acquiring knowledge. Without this assumption we can no more infer anything or know anything than a bird can fly in a vacuum. All science reposes on this faith in our own minds, which implies and includes faith in the Author of the mind. This primitive faith in ourselves is moral in its nature. So of all that truth which is justly called self-evident. No arguments are to be adduced for it. In every process of reasoning it is presupposed. We can prove nothing except on the basis of propositions that admit of no proof. But if we leave out of account the domain of self-evident truth, which is ground common to both religion and science, religious beliefs, as far as they are sound, are based on adequate evidence.

V. The historical argument. The philosophy of history is synonymous with the unveiling of the plan revealed in the course of human affairs. The discovery of this plan is the chief motive in the study of history, without which it would have, as it has been truly said, little more interest than the record of the battles of crows and daws. Divine providence is discerned in the fact that

— “through the ages one increasing purpose runs.”

Hegel presents us with profound observations on the philosophy of history, notwithstanding the alloy of *a priori* speculation mingled with them. The thought that reason is the “sovereign of the world,” he tells us, is the hypothesis in the domain of history which it verifies. Hegel shares in the approval given by Socrates to the remark of Anaxagoras that reason or intelligence governs the world, and quotes the saying of Aristotle that in this saying Anaxagoras “appeared as a sober man among the drunken,” in ascribing nothing to chance. “The truth,” Hegel adds, “that a providence, that of God, presides over the events of the world, consorts with that proposition.”<sup>1</sup>

History, as containing at once a providential order and a moral order enclosed within it, discovers God. Events do not take place in a chaotic series. A progress is discernible, an orderly succession of phenomena, the accomplishment of ends by the

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, Sibree's Transl., pp. 9, 12, 13.

concurrence of agencies beyond the power of individuals to originate or combine. There is a Power that "makes for righteousness." Amid all the disorder of the world, as Bishop Butler has convincingly shown, there is manifested on the part of the Power which governs, an approbation of right and a condemnation of wrong, analogous to the manifestation of justice and holiness which emanates from righteous rulers among men. If righteousness appears to be but imperfectly carried out, it is an indication that in this life the system is incomplete, and that here we see only its beginnings. In order to disprove the rectitude or the power of the divine Sovereign, the assailant must first make good the contention that the system as here seen is complete. On him rests the burden of proof.

It is objected to the belief that God is personal, that personality implies limitation, and that, if personal, God could not be infinite and absolute. "Infinite" (and the same is true of "absolute") is an adjective, not a substantive. When used as a noun, preceded by the definite article, it signifies not a being, but an abstraction. When it stands as a predicate, as remarked before, it means that the subject, be it space, time, or some quality of a being, is without limit. Thus, when I affirm that space is infinite, I express a positive perception, or thought. I mean not only that imagination can set no bounds to space, but also that this inability is owing, not to any defect in the imagination or conceptive faculty, but to the nature of the object. When I say that God is infinite in power, I mean that He can do all things which are objects of power, or that His power is incapable of increase. No amount of power could be added to the power of which He is possessed. It is only when "the Infinite" is erroneously taken as the synonym of the sum of all existence, that personality is made to be incompatible with God's infinitude. No such conception of Him is needed for the satisfaction of the reason or the heart of man. Enough that He is the ground of the existence of all beings outside of Himself, or the creative and sustaining Power. There are no limitations upon His power which He has not voluntarily set. Such limitation—as in giving life to rational agents capable of self-determination, and in allowing them scope for its exercise—is not imposed on Him, but depends on His own choice.

An absolute being is independent of all other beings for its



existence and for the full realization of its nature. It is contended that inasmuch as self-consciousness is conditioned on the distinction of the *ego* from the *non-ego*, the subject from the object, a personal being cannot have the attribute of self-existence, cannot be absolute. Without some other existence than himself, a being cannot be self-conscious. The answer to this is, that the premise is an unwarranted generalization from what is true in the case of the human, finite, dependent personality of man, which is developed in connection with a body, and is only one of numerous finite personalities under the same class. To assert that self-consciousness cannot exist independently of such conditions, because it is through them that I come to a knowledge of myself, is a great leap in logic. The proposition that man is in the image of God does not necessarily imply that the divine intelligence is subject to the restrictions and infirmities that belong to the human. It is not implied that God ascertains truth by a gradual process of investigation or of reasoning, or that He deliberates on a plan of action, and casts about for the appropriate means of executing it. These limitations are characteristic, not of intelligence in itself, but of finite intelligence. It is meant that He is not an impersonal principle or occult force, but is self-conscious and self-determining. Nor is it asserted that He is perfectly comprehensible by us. Far from it. It is not pretended that we are able fully to think away the limitations which cleave to us in our character as dependent and finite, and to frame thus an adequate conception of a person infinite and absolute. Nevertheless, the existence of such a person, whom we can apprehend if not comprehend, is verified to our minds by sufficient evidence. Pantheism, with its immanent Absolute, void of personal attributes, and its self-developing universe, postulates a deity limited, subject to change, and reaching self-consciousness — if it is ever reached — only in men. And Pantheism, when it denies the free and responsible nature of man, maims the creature whom it pretends to deify, and annihilates not only morality, but religion also, in any proper sense of the term.

The citadel of Theism is in the consciousness of our own personality. Within ourselves God reveals himself more directly than through any other channel. He impinges, so to speak, on the soul which finds in its primitive activity an intimation and implication of an unconditioned Cause on whom it is dependent,—a

Cause self-conscious like itself, and speaking with holy authority in conscience, wherein also is presented the end which the soul is to pursue through its own free self-determination,—an end which could only be set by a Being both intelligent and holy. The yearning for fellowship with the Being thus revealed—indistinct though it be, well-nigh stifled by absorption in finite objects and in the vain quest for rest and joy in them—is inseparable from human nature. There is an unappeased thirst in the soul when cut off from God. It seeks for “living water.”

Atheism is an insult to humanity. A good man is a man with a purpose, a righteous purpose. He aims at well-being,—at the well-being of himself and of the world of which he forms a part. This end he pursues seriously and earnestly, and feels bound to pursue, let the cost to himself be what it may. To tell him that while he is under a sacred obligation to have this purpose, and pursue this end, there is yet no purpose or end in the universe in which he is acting his part—what is this but to offer a gross affront to his reason and moral sense? He is to abstain from frivolity; he is to act from an intelligent purpose, for the accomplishment of rational ends; but the universe, he is told, is the offspring of gigantic frivolity. The latter is without purpose or end; there chance or blind fate rules.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRINCIPAL ANTI-THEISTIC THEORIES: PANTHEISM, POSITIVISM, MATERIALISM, AGNOSTICISM

THE three inseparable, yet distinct, data of consciousness are self, material nature, and God. Pantheism would merge the first two in the third — in its essence an impersonal Deity. Materialism would merge the first and the third in the second, and so deify matter. Positivism abjures belief in all three, and resolves the universe, so far as we have any means of knowing, into a "Succession of appearances." Agnosticism would place behind these phenomena an inscrutable "energy," its definition of the third element.

Pantheism identifies God with the world, or the sum total of being. It differs from Atheism in holding to something besides and beneath finite things, — an all-pervading Cause or Essence. It differs from Deism in denying that God is separate from the world, and that the world is sustained and guided by energies exerted from without. It does not differ from Theism in affirming the immanence of God, for on this Theism likewise insists; but it differs from Theism in denying to the immanent Power distinct consciousness and will, and an existence not dependent on the world. Pantheism denies, and Theism asserts, creation. With the denial to God of will and conscious intelligence, Pantheism excludes design. Finite things emerge into being, and pass away, and the course of nature proceeds through the perpetual operation of an agency which has no cognizance of its work except so far as it may arrive at self-consciousness in man.

In the system of Spinoza, the most celebrated and influential of modern Pantheists, it is asserted that there is, and can be, but one substance, — *una et unica substantia*. Of the infinite number of infinite attributes which constitute the one substance, two are discerned by us, — extension and thought. These, distinct in our perception, are not disparate in the substance. Both being mani-

festations of a simple identical essence, the order of existence is parallel to the order of thought. All individual things are modes of one or the other of the attributes, that is, of the substance as far as it is discerned by us. There is a complete correspondence or harmony, although there is no reciprocal influence, between bodies and minds. But the modes do not make up the substance, which is prior to them; they are transient as ripples on the surface of the sea. The imagination regards them as entities; but reason looks beneath them, to the eternal essence of which they are but a fleeting manifestation.

No philosopher, with the possible exception of Aristotle, has been more lauded for his rigorous logic than Spinoza. In truth, few philosophers have included more fallacies in the exposition of their systems. The pages of the *Ethics* swarm with paralogisms, all veiled under the forms of rigid mathematical statement. His fundamental definitions, whatever verbal precision may belong to them, are, as regards the realities of being, unproved assumptions. His reasoning, from beginning to end, is vitiated by the realistic presupposition that the actual existence of a being can be inferred from the definition of a word. He falls into this mistake of finding proof of the reality of a thing from the contents of a conception, in his very first definition, where he says, "By that which is the cause of itself, I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature can only be conceived as existent." His argument is an argument from definitions, without having offered proof of the existence of the thing defined. Spinoza fails to prove that only one substance can exist, and that no other substance can be brought into being which is capable of self-activity, though dependent for the origin and continuance of its existence upon another. Why the one and simple substance should have modes; why it should have these discoverable modes, and no other; how the modes of thought and extension are made to run parallel with each other; how the infinite variety of modes, embracing stars and suns, men and animals, minds and bodies, and all other finite things, are derived in their order and place,—these are problems with regard to which the system of Spinoza, though professing to explain the universe by a method purely deductive, leaves us wholly in the dark.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>One of the hard questions proposed to Spinoza by Tschirnhausern, his correspondent, was, how the existence and variety of external things is to be

The ideal Pantheism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel pursues a different path. It undertakes still to unveil the Absolute Being, and from the Absolute to trace the evolution of all concrete existences, mental and material. The Absolute in Fichte is the universal *ego*, of which individual minds, together with external things, the objects of thought, are the phenomenal product, — a universal *ego* which is void of consciousness, and of which it is vain to attempt to form a conception. The impression we have of externality is from the check put upon the self-activity of the mind by its own inward law. From this Solipsism — Panegoism, it is sometimes styled — Fichte sought in his ethical philosophy for a place for a plurality of *egos*, and a substitute for Theism in the system of moral order. Schelling, avoiding Idealism, made the Absolute the point of indifference and common basis of subject and object. For the perception of this impersonal Deity, which is assumed to be indefinable, and not an object of thought, he postulated an impossible faculty of intellectual intuition, wherein the individual escapes from himself, and soars above the conditions or essential limits of conscious thinking in a finite mind. Hegel advances upon the same path. He discerns and repudiates the one-sided position of Kant in resolving our knowledge of nature, beyond the bare fact of its existence, into a subjective process. The divine reason is immanent in the world and apprehensible by man. There is a rationality in nature and in human history. But Hegel swings to the opposite extreme, and identifies object and subject, thing and thinker, as in essence one. Starting, like Schelling, with this assumption that subject and object, thought and thing, are identical, he ventures on the bold emprise of setting down all the successive stages through which thought in its absolute or most general form, by means of a kind of momentum assumed to inhere in it, develops the entire chain of concepts, or the whole variety and aggregate of particular existences, up to the point where, in the mental movement of the philosopher, the universe thus constituted attains to complete self-consciousness. In the logic of Hegel, we are told, the universe reveals itself to the spectator with no aid from experience in the process of its self-unfolding. The complex organism of thought, which is identical with the world of being, evolves itself under his eye.

deduced from the attribute of extension. See Pollock, *Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy*, p. 173.



There is a difficulty, to begin with, in this self-evolving of "the idea." Motion is presupposed, and motion is a conception derived from experience. Moreover, few critics at present would contend that all the links in this metaphysical chain are forged of solid metal. There are breaks which are filled up with an unsubstantial substitute for it. Transitions are effected — for example, where matter, or life, or mind emerge — rather by sleight of hand than by a legitimate application of the logical method. But if it were granted that the edifice is compact, and coherent in all its parts, it is still only a ghostly castle. It is an ideal skeleton of a universe. Its value is at best hypothetical and negative. The universe is more than a string of abstractions. This was forcibly stated in the criticism by Schelling in his later system. If a world were to exist, and to be rationally framed, it might possibly be conformed to this conception or outline. Whether the world is a reality, experience alone can determine. The highest merit which can be claimed for the ideal scheme of Hegel is such as belongs to the plans of an architect as they are conceived in his mind, before a beginning has been made of the edifice, or the spade has touched the ground. The radical fault of the Hegelian system, and its erroneous implications, are not averted by the numerous enlightened comments on the constitution of nature, and especially on the philosophy of history.<sup>1</sup>

Independently of other difficulties in the way of the various theories of Pantheism which have been propounded in ancient and modern times, it is a sufficient refutation of them that they stand in contradiction to consciousness, and that they are at variance with conscience. It is through self-consciousness that our first notion of substance and of unity is derived. The manifold operations of thought, feeling, imagination, memory, affection, consciously proceed from a single source within. The mind is revealed to itself as a separate, substantial, undivided entity. Pantheism, in resolving personal being into a mere phenomenon, or a phase of an impersonal essence, and in abolishing the gulf of separation between the subject and the object, clashes with the first and clearest affirmation of consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course, there was a Theistic school of interpreters of Hegel. Others have sought to graft Theism upon Hegelianism. The consideration of these phases of opinion, including the more recent "Neo-Hegelian" speculation, would be out of place here.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note 5.

Every system of Pantheism is necessitarian. It is vain to say, that, where there is no constraint from without, there is freedom of the will. A plant growing out of a seed would not become free by becoming conscious. The determinism which refers all voluntary action to a force within, which is capable of moving only on one line, and is incapable of alternative action, is equivalent, in its bearing on responsibility, to fatalism. On this theory, moral accountableness is an illusion.<sup>1</sup> No distinction is left between natural history and moral history. Pantheism sweeps away the absolute antithesis between good and evil, the perception of which is the very life of conscience. Under that philosophy, evil, wherever it occurs, is normal. Evil, when viewed in all its relations, is good. It appears to be the opposite of good, only when it is contemplated in a more restricted relation, and from a point of view too confined. Such a judgment respecting moral evil undermines morality in theory, and, were it acted on, would corrupt society. It would dissolve the bonds of obligation. In the proportion in which the unperverted moral sense corresponds to the reality of things, to that extent is Pantheism in all of its forms disproved.

Positivism is the antipode of Pantheistic philosophy. So far from laying claim to omniscience, it goes to the other extreme of disclaiming all knowledge of the origin of things or of their interior nature. A fundamental principle of Positivism, as expounded by Comte, is the ignoring of both efficient and final causes. There is no proof, it is affirmed, that such causes exist. Science takes notice of naught but phenomena presented to the senses. The whole function of science is to classify facts under the rubrics of similarity and sequence. The sum of human knowledge hath this extent, no more. As for any links of connection between phenomena, or any plan under which they occur, science knows nothing of either.

But where do we get the notion of similarity, and of simultaneity and succession in time? The senses do not provide us with these ideas. At the threshold, then, Positivism renounces its own primary maxim. The principle of causation and the perception of design have a genesis which entitles them to not less credit than is given to the recognition of likeness and temporal sequence. A Positivist, however disposed, with M. Comte, to discard psychology,

<sup>1</sup> This has been shown above, in ch. i. See, also, J. Martineau, *A Study of Spinoza*, p. 233.

must admit that there are mental phenomena. He must admit that they form together a group having a distinct character. He must refer them to a distinct spiritual entity, or to a material origin, in which case he lapses into Materialism.

The law of three successive states, — the religious, the metaphysical, and the positive, — which Comte asserted to belong to the history of thought, — this law, in the form in which it was proclaimed by Comte, is without foundation in historical fact. Belief in a personal God has coexisted, and does now coexist, in connection with a belief in second causes, and loyalty to the maxims of inductive investigation.

J. S. Mill, while adhering to the proposition that we know only phenomena, attempted to rescue the Positivist scheme from scepticism, which is its proper corollary, by holding to something exterior to us, which is "the permanent possibility of sensations," and by speaking of "a thread of consciousness." But matter cannot be made a something which produces sensations, without giving up the Positivist denial both of causation and of our knowledge of anything save phenomena. Nor is it possible to speak of a "thread of consciousness," if there be nothing in the mind but successive states of consciousness. Mr. Mill was bound by a logical necessity to deny the existence of anything except mental sensations, — phenomena of his own individual consciousness; or if he overstepped the limit of phenomena, and believed in "a something," whether material or mental, he did it at the sacrifice of his fundamental doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

The principal adversaries of Theism at the present day are Materialism and Agnosticism. Materialism is the doctrine that mind has no existence except as a function of the body: it is a product of organization. In its crass form, Materialism affirms that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. This exploded view involves the notion that thought is a material substance contained somehow in the brain. In its more refined statement, Materialism asserts that thought, feeling, volition, are phenomena of the nervous organism, as magnetism is the property of the loadstone. Thought is compared to a flame, which first burns faintly, then more brightly, then flickers, and at length goes out, as the material source of combustion is consumed or dissipated.

<sup>1</sup> See remarks of Dr. Flint, *Antitheistic Theories*, pp. 185, 186.

Materialism is a theory which was brought forward in very ancient times. It is not open to the reproach, nor can it boast of the attraction, of novelty. And it deserves to be remarked, that the data on which its merit as a theory is to be judged remain substantially unaltered. It is a serious though frequent mistake to think that modern physiology, in its microscopic examination of the brain, has discovered any new clew to the solution of the problem of the relation of the brain to the mind. The evidences of the close connection and interaction of mind and body, or of mental and physical states, are not more numerous or more plain now than they have always been. That fatigue dulls the attention, that narcotics stimulate or stupefy the powers of thought and emotion, that fever may produce delirium, and a blow on the head may suspend consciousness, are facts with which mankind have always been familiar. The influence of the body on the mind is in countless ways manifest. On the contrary, that the physical organism is affected by mental states is an equally common experience. The feeling of guilt sends the blood to the cheek; fear makes the knees quake; joy and love brighten the eye; the will curbs and controls the bodily organs, or puts them in motion in obedience to its behest. But there is no warrant in the interaction of mind and body for the opinion that the latter, or any other extra-mental reality, is the cause or the subject of mental cognition.

Not only are the facts on either side familiar to everybody, but no nearer approach has been made toward bridging the gulf between physical states—in particular, molecular movements of the brain—and consciousness. Says Tyndall, “The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling,—we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, How are these physical states con-

nected with the facts of consciousness?"<sup>1</sup> This is said, be it observed, on the supposition of a sweeping psycho-physical parallelism between physical and mental states, which is incapable of proof. Close as is the relation of the brain and the mind, the field is often left in the main to the self-activity of each according to its own nature. Not even a Materialist, however, doubts that there is a class of phenomena which no physical observation is capable of revealing. If the brain of Sophocles, when he was composing the *Antigone*, had been laid bare, and the observer had possessed an organ of vision capable of discerning every movement within it, he would have perceived not the faintest trace of the thoughts which enter into that poem,—or of the sentiments that inspired the author. One might as well cut open a bean-stalk, or search a handful of sand, in the hope of finding thought and emotion.

It is easy to prove, and it has been proved, that Materialism regarded as a theory is self-destructive. If opinion is not the product of the mind's own self-activity, but is merely a product of the molecular motion of nervous substance, on what ground is one opinion preferred to another? What is the criterion for the judgment? Is not one shuffle of atoms as normal as another? if not, by what criterion is one to be approved, and the other rejected? How can either be said to be true or false, when both are equally necessary, and there is no norm to serve as a touchstone of their validity? It is impossible to pronounce one kind of brain normal, and another abnormal; since the rule on which the distinction is to be made is itself a mere product of molecular action, and therefore possessed of no independent, objective validity. To declare a given doctrine true, and another false, when each has the same justification as the rule on which they are judged, is a suicidal proceeding. Like absurdities follow the assertion by a materialist that one thing is morally right, and another morally wrong, one thing noble, and another base, one thing wise, and another foolish. There is no objective truth, no criterion having any surer warrant than the objects to which it is applied. There is no judge between the parties; the judge is himself a party on trial. Thus Materialism lapses into scepticism.

<sup>1</sup> *Fragments of Science*, p. 121; 5th ed., p. 42. Declarations apparently of the same purport occur occasionally, — yet, as in Tyndall, inconsistently, — in Spencer. See his *Psychology*, vol. i. §§ 62, 272.



Physiology is powerless to explain the simple fact of sense-perception, or the rudimental feeling at the basis of it. A wave of tenuous ether strikes on the retina of the eye. The impact of the ether induces a molecular motion in the optic nerve, which, in turn, produces a corresponding effect in the sensorium lodged in the skull. On this condition there ensues a *feeling*; but this feeling, a moment's reflection will show, is something totally dissimilar to the wave-motions which preceded and provoked it. But, further, in the act of perception the mind attends to the sensation, and compares one sensation with another. This discrimination is a mental act on which Materialism sheds not the faintest ray of light. The facts of memory, of conception, and reasoning, the phenomena of conscience, the operations of the will, — of these the Materialistic theory can give no reasonable or intelligible account. The Materialist is obliged to deny moral freedom. Voluntary action he holds to be necessitated action. The consciousness of liberty with the corresponding feelings of self-approbation or guilt are stigmatized as delusive. No man could have chosen or acted otherwise than in fact he did choose or act, any more than he could have added a cubit to his stature. Of the origin and persistency of these ideas and convictions of the soul, Materialism hopelessly fails to give any rational account.

Materialism, as it is usually held at present, starts with the fact of the simultaneity of thought and molecular changes. This is so far exaggerated as to make it inclusive of all mental action. This is the doctrine of "psycho-physical parallelism" or "conscious automatism." If there were ground for this untenable assumption, the task would remain of showing how the former are produced by the latter. How do brain-movements produce thought-movements? If consciousness enters as an effect into the chain of molecular motion, then, by the accepted law of conservation and correlation, consciousness, in turn, is a cause reacting upon the brain. But this conclusion is directly contrary to the Materialistic theory, and is accordingly rejected. It will not do to allow that force is convertible into consciousness. There must be no break in the physical chain. Consciousness is excluded from being a link in this chain. Consciousness can subtract no force from matter. It will not do to answer that consciousness is the attendant of the motions of matter. What causes it to attend? What is the ground of what parallelism exists between the series of mental

and the series of material manifestations? Is it from the nature of matter that both alike arise? Then, how can thought be denied to be a link in the physical series? If it be some form of being neither material nor mental, the same consequence follows, and all the additional difficulties are incurred which belong to the monistic doctrine of Spinoza. A refuge is sought in the self-contradictory notion of "epiphenomena," or concomitants which are not effects but which are figuratively designated as *shadows* of molecular action! There are limits to the interaction of the brain and the mind; there are distinct groups of phenomena; all mental states, including sensations so far as consciousness is involved, have their invisible centre and source in the indivisible SELF.

Such is the mire into which one falls upon the attempt to hold that man is a conscious automaton. It is not escaped by imagining matter to be endowed with mystical and marvellous capacities, which would make it different from itself, and endue it with a heterogeneous nature. Secret potencies, after the manner of the hylozoist Pantheism of the ancients, are attributed to the primeval atoms. "Mind-stuff," or an occult mentality, is imagined to reside in the clod, or, to make the idea more attractive, in the effulgent sun. The Platonic philosophy is said to lurk potentially in its beams. This is fancy, not science. The reality of a mental subject, in which the modes of consciousness have their unity, is implied in the language of Materialists, even when they are advocating their theory. The presence of a personal agent by whom thoughts and things are compared, their order of succession observed, and their origin investigated, is constantly assumed.

The proposition that the ideas of cause and effect, substance, self, etc., which are commonly held to be of subjective origin, are the product of sensations, and derived from experience, is disproved by the fact that experience is impossible without them. In establishing the *a priori* character of the intuitions, Kant accomplished a work which forever excludes Materialism from being the creed of any but confused and illogical reasoners.

Agnosticism, the system of Herbert Spencer, includes disbelief in the personality of God, but also equally in the personality of man. There is, of course, the verbal admission of a subject and object of knowledge. This distinction, it is even said, is "the

consciousness of a difference transcending all other differences.”<sup>1</sup> But subject and object, knower and thing known, are pronounced to be purely phenomenal. The reality behind them is said to be utterly incognizable. Nothing is known of it but its bare existence. So, too, we are utterly in the dark as to the relations subsisting among things as distinguished from their transfigured manifestations in consciousness; for these manifestations reveal nothing save the bare existence of objects, together with relations between them which are perfectly inscrutable. The phenomena are symbols, but they are symbols only in the algebraic sense. They are not pictures, they are not representations of the objects that produce them. They are effects, in consciousness, of unknown agencies. The order in which the effects occur suggests, we are told, a corresponding order in these agencies. But what is “order,” what is regularity of succession, when predicted of noumena, but words void of meaning? “What we are conscious of as properties of matter, even down to its weight and resistance, are but subjective affections produced by objective agencies which are unknown and unknowable.”<sup>2</sup> These effects are generically classified as matter, motion, and force. These terms express certain “likenesses of kind,” the most general likenesses, in the subjective affections thus produced. There are certain likenesses of connection in these effects, which we class as laws. Matter and motion, space and time, are reducible to force. But “force” only designates the subjective affection in its ultimate or most general expression. Of force as an objective reality we know nothing. It follows that the same is true of cause, and of every other term descriptive of power. There *is* power, there *is* cause, apart from our feeling; but as to *what* they are we are entirely in the dark. “The interpretation of all phenomena in terms of matter, motion, and force, is nothing more than the reduction of our complex symbols of thought to the simplest symbols; and when the equation is brought to its lowest terms, the symbols remain symbols still.”<sup>3</sup> Further, the world of consciousness and the world of things as apprehended in consciousness, are symbols of a reality to which both in common are to be attributed. “A Power of which the nature remains forever inconceivable, and to which no limits in Time or Space can be imagined, works in us

<sup>1</sup> Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, 2d ed., i. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 493.

<sup>3</sup> *First Principles*, 2d ed., p. 558.

certain effects.”<sup>1</sup> Thus all our science consists in a classification of states of consciousness which are the product of the inscrutable Cause. It is a “transfigured Realism.” Reality, in any other sense, is a *terra incognita*.

With these views is associated Mr. Spencer’s doctrine of evolution. Evolution is the method of action of the inscrutable force. He is positive in the assertion that “the phenomena of Evolution are to be deduced from the Persistence of Force.” By this he means the “Absolute Force” — “some Cause, which transcends our knowledge and conception.” It is “an Unconditioned Reality without beginning or end.”<sup>2</sup> But persistence applied to phenomenal forces signifies that these in their totality are quantitatively constant. This could not be said of the Absolute Force, the Unknown Cause. Yet, it is forces in the *phenomenal* sense, or the conservation of energy, which is made the starting-point of evolution. “But the conservation of energy is not a law of change, still less a law of qualities,” whereas the celestial, organic, social, and other phenomena which make up what Mr. Spencer calls cosmic evolution, are so many series of qualitative changes.<sup>4</sup> “The conservation of energy,” as Mr. Ward points out, “does not initiate events, and furnishes absolutely no clew to qualitative diversity. It is entirely a quantitative law.” The confusion in the meaning attached to “Persistence of Force” makes shipwreck of the entire evolutionary scheme in which this vague and ambiguous phrase plays so important a part.

We can only glance at the steps of the process. Homogeneous matter, it is assumed, diversifies or differentiates itself. A passage from inorganic being to life is gained only by a leap. The development is represented as going on until nervous organism arises, and reaches a certain stage of complexity, when sentience appears, and, at length personal consciousness, with all its complexity of contents. But consciousness is a growth. All our mental life is woven out of sensations. Intuitions are the product of experience, — not of the individual merely, but of the race, since the law of heredity transmits the acquisitions of the ancestor to his progeny. So mind is built up from rudimental sensations. The lowest form of life issues at last in the intellect of a Bacon or a Newton. And life, it seems to be held, is evolved from unorganized matter.

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, § 147.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, § 62.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i. p. 214.



What, according to Spencer's own principles, are "matter," and "sensuous organism," and "life," independently of consciousness and what there is no consciousness to apprehend them? How can Nature be used to begin consciousness, and consciousness be used, in turn, to begin Nature? How are reason, imagination, memory, conscience and the entire stock of mental experiences of which a human or a beast is capable, evolved from nerve-substance? These are the questions we waive, and direct our attention to the doctrine of "the Unknowable."

What is "the Absolute" and "the Infinite" which are declared to be out of the range of knowledge, and which, the moment the knowing faculty attempts to deal with them, lead to manifold contradictions? They are mere abstractions. They have no other than a merely verbal existence. They are reached by thinking away all limit, all conditions, all specific qualities. In short, "the Absolute" as thus described is nothing.

The attempt is made to exhibit a synthesis of "the detailed phenomena of life and mind and society in terms of matter, motion, and force."<sup>1</sup> But the "synthesis," like the prior "analysis," confounds abstraction with analysis. "Knowledge is to be verified by ruthlessly abstracting from the concrete real all qualitative specifications. Central bodies, organisms, societies, are to be reduced to their formal terms, viz., Matter, Motion, Force." What is merely "a generalization from the material world" is turned into an instrument for revealing a path, which is development only in name. In this way, the world of things, material and mental, is reconstructed. Things are created which were not involved.

If the Unknown Absolute be treated as real, absurdities follow.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, l. 255 seq.

<sup>2</sup> The anomalies which Kant and Hamilton derive from a quantitative conception of the Infinite are numerous. The anomalies of Kant, and of Hamilton and Mansel, are capable of being resolved. They involve fallacies. A quantitative view of the Infinite is fundamentally at the base of the assertion that contradictions belong to the conception of it. The Infinite is treated as if it were a complete whole, as if it were a finite. Hamilton's doctrine of necessity depends partly on the idea of "the Infinite" and "the Absolute" as mere abstractions, and partly on a restricted definition of knowledge. We cannot know what is finite, as absolutely bounded, or as infinitely unbounded. The first is impossible, because it is contrary to the nature of finiteness. The second is not impossible. True, we cannot imagine space as complete; we cannot imagine all space, space as a whole, because this, too, is contrary to the reality. But we know space as infinite; that is, we know space



The Absolute which Spencer actually places at the foundation of his system is antithetical to relative being ; it is correlated to the relative. Moreover, the Absolute comes within the pale of consciousness, be the cognition of it however vague. Only so far as we are conscious of it, have we any evidence of its reality. Moreover, it is the *cause* of the relative. It is to the agency of the Absolute that all states of consciousness are referable. "*It works in us,*" says Spencer, "certain effects." Plainly, the Absolute, the real Absolute, is *related*. Only as related in the ways just stated is its existence known. Mr. Spencer says himself that the mind must in "some dim mode of consciousness posit a non-relative, and in some similarly dim mode of consciousness, a *relation between it and the relative.*"<sup>1</sup>

Plainly, we know not only *that* the Absolute is, but also, to the same extent, *what* it is. But let us look more narrowly at the function assigned to the Absolute, and the mode in which we ascertain it. Here Mr. Spencer brings in the principle of CAUSE. The Absolute is the cause of both subject and object. And the idea of cause we derive, according to his own teaching, from the changes of consciousness which imply causation. "The force," he says, "by which we ourselves produce changes, and which serves to symbolize the cause of changes in general, is the final disclosure of analysis."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the experience of conscious causal agency in ourselves gives us the idea of "force." This is "the original datum of consciousness." This is all we know of force. Only as we are ourselves conscious of power, do we know anything of power in the universe. Now, Mr. Spencer chooses to name the ultimate reality "Force" — "the Absolute Force." He declares it to be inscrutable ; since the force of which we are immediately conscious is not persistent, is a relative. Yet he says that he means by it "the persistence of *some cause* which transcends our knowledge and conception." Take away *cause* from the Absolute, and nothing is left ; and the only cause of which we have any idea is our own conscious activity. If Mr. Spencer would make the causal idea, as thus derived, the symbol for the interpretation of "changes in general" he would be a Theist. By deftly

and know not only that we cannot limit it, but positively that there is no limit to it. We know what power is. We do not lose our notion of power when we predicate infinitude of it. It is power still, but power incapable of limit.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays*, vol. iii. pp. 293 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *First Principles*, p. 169.

resolving cause into the physical idea of "force," he gives to his system a Pantheistic character. It is only by converting the *a priori* idea of cause, as given in consciousness, into a "force" which we "cannot form any idea of," and which he has no warrant for assuming, that he avoids Theism.<sup>1</sup>

Let us observe the consequences of holding the Agnostic rigidly to his own principles.

According to Mr. Spencer's numerous and explicit avowals, all of our conceptions and language respecting nature are vitiated by the same anthropomorphism which he finds in the ascribing of personality to God. All science is made out to be a mental picture to which there is no likeness in realities outside of consciousness. To speak of matter as impenetrable, to make statements respecting an imponderable ether, molecular movements, atoms, even respecting space, time, motion, cause, force, is to talk in figures, *without the least knowledge* of the realities denoted by them. It is not a case where a symbol is adopted to signify *known* reality. We cannot compare the reality with the symbol or notion, because of the reality we have not the slightest knowledge. When we speak, for example, of the vibrations of the air, we have not the least

<sup>1</sup> Later expressions of Mr. Spencer indicate a nascent disposition to cross the limit of bald phenomenalism and to concede that the "Infinite and Eternal Energy," from which all things proceed, "is not, as far as our knowledge is concerned, an absolute blank." "In the development of religion," he says, "the last stage reached is recognition of the truth that force as it exists beyond consciousness, cannot be like what we know as force within consciousness, and that yet, as either is capable of generating the other, they must be different modes of the same. . . . Consequently . . . the Power manifested throughout the world distinguished as material, is the same Power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness." "We are thus led," it is added, "to rather a spiritualistic than a materialistic interpretation of the universe." But in the context these qualifications of absolute neutrality between the two hypotheses, and from absolute ignorance of the nature of the primal Energy, are studiously guarded. See Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* (1896), vol. iii. p. 173, §§ 659, 660. Mr. John Fiske goes, perhaps, farther in the right direction than Mr. Spencer. He believes that "the Infinite Power which is manifested in the universe is essentially psychical in its nature, that between God and the Human Soul there is a real kinship, although we may be unable to render any scientific account of it." *Through Nature to God*, p. 162. He protests against attempts "to take away from our notion of God the human element" (p. 166). Yet he fails to justify explicitly in our conception the elements which are essential in real personality and warrant us in containing in it, for substance, the truth that He hears and answers prayer.

knowledge either of what the air is, or of what vibrations are. We are merely giving name to an unknown cause of mental states ; but even of *cause* itself, predicated of the object in itself, and of what is meant by its *agency* in giving rise to effects in us, we are as ignorant as a blind man of colors. Mr. Spencer says that matter is probably composed of ultimate, homogeneous units.<sup>1</sup> He appears in various places, to think well of the atomic theory of matter. But if he is speaking of matter as it is, independently of our sensations, he forgets, when he talks thus, the fundamental doctrine of his philosophy. He undertakes to tell us about realities, when he cannot consistently speak of aught but their algebraic symbols, or the phenomena of consciousness. The atomic theory of matter carries us as far into the unknown realm of ontology as the doctrine of the personality of the Absolute, or any other proposition embraced in Christian Theism.

It is obvious that Agnosticism is the destruction of science. All the investigations and reasonings of science proceed on the foundation of axioms, — call them intuitions, rational postulates, or by any other name. But these, according to Agnostics, denote simply a certain stage at which the process of evolution has arrived. What is to hinder them from vanishing, or resolving themselves into another set of axioms, with the forward movement of this unresting process? What then will become of the doctrines of Agnosticism itself? It is plain that on this philosophy, all knowledge of realities, as distinct from transitory impressions, is a house built on the sand. All science is reduced to *Schein*— mere semblance.

It is impossible for the Agnostic to limit his knowledge to experience, and to reject as unverified the implications of experience, without abandoning nearly all that he holds true. If he sticks to his principle, his creed will be a short one. Consciousness is confined to the present moment. I am conscious of remembering an experience in the past. This consciousness as a present fact I cannot deny without a contradiction. But how do I know that the object of the recollection — be it a thought, or feeling, or experience of any sort — ever had a reality? How do I know anything past, or that there is a past? Now, memory is necessary to the comparison of sensations, to reasoning, to our whole mental life. Yet to believe in memory is to transcend

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. p. 157.

experience. I have certain sensations which I attribute collectively to a cause named my "body." Like sensations lead me to recognize the existence of other bodies like my own. But how do I know that there is consciousness within these bodies? How do I know that my fellow-men whom I see about me have minds like my own? The senses cannot perceive the intelligence of the friends about me. I infer that they are intelligent, but in this inference I transcend experience. Experience reduced to its exact terms, according to the methods of Agnosticism, is confined to the present feeling,—the feeling of the transient moment. When the Agnostic goes beyond this, when he infers that what is remembered was once presented in consciousness, that his fellow-men are thinking beings, and not mindless puppets, that any intelligent beings exist outside of himself, he transcends experience. If he were to predicate intelligence of God, he would be guilty of no graver assumption than when he ascribes intelligence to the fellow-men whom he sees moving about, and with whom he is conversing.

The Spencerian identification of subject and object, mind and matter, is illusive and groundless. They are declared to be "the subjective and objective faces of the same thing." They are said to be "the opposite faces" of one reality. Sometimes they are spoken of as its "inner and outer side." On the one side, we are told, there are nerve-waves; on the other there are feelings. What is the fact, or the reality, of which these two are "faces" or "sides"? From much of the language which Mr. Spencer uses—it might be said, from the general drift of his remarks—the impression would be gained, that the reality is material, and that feeling is the mere concomitant or effect. But this theorem he disavows. He even says, that, as between idealism and materialism, the former is to be preferred.<sup>1</sup> More, he tells us, can be alleged for it than for the opposite theory. The nerve-movement is phenomenal not less than the feeling. The two are coördinate. The fact or the reality is to be distinguished from both. As phenomena, there are two. There are two facts, and these two are the only realities accessible to us. The supposed power, or thing in itself, is behind, and is absolutely hidden. The difference between the *ego* and the *non-ego* "transcends all other differences." A unit of motion and a unit of feeling have nothing in common.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 159.

"Belief in the reality of self," it is confessed by Mr. Spencer, is "a belief which no hypothesis enables us to escape."<sup>1</sup> It is impossible, he proceeds to argue, that the impressions and ideas "which constitute consciousness" can be thought to be the only existences; this is "really unthinkable." If there is an impression, there is "something impressed." The sceptic must hold that the ideas and impressions into which he has decomposed consciousness are *his* ideas and impressions. Moreover, if he has an impression of his personal existence, why reject this impression alone as unreal? The belief in one's personal existence, Mr. Spencer assures us, is "unavoidable"; it is indorsed by "the assent of mankind at large"; it is indorsed, too, by the "suicide of the sceptical argument against it." Yet the surprising declaration is added, that "reason rejects" this belief. Reason rejects a belief which it is impossible to abandon, and against which the adverse reasoning of the doubter shatters itself in pieces. On what ground is this strange conclusion reached? Why, "the cognition of self," it is asserted, is negatived by the laws of thought. The condition of thought is the antithesis of subject and object. Hence the mental act in which self is known implies "a perceiving subject and a perceived object." If it is the true self that thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? If subject and object are one and the same, thought is annihilated.

If the two factors of consciousness, the *ego* and the *non-ego*, are irreducible, the reality of self is the natural inference. The "unavoidable" belief that self is a reality is still further confirmed by the absolute impossibility of thinking without attributing the act to self.

But let us look at the psychological difficulty which moves Mr. Spencer instantly to lay down his arms, and surrender an "unavoidable" belief. In every mental act there is an implicit consciousness of self, whether the object is a thing external or a mental affection. From this cognition of self there is no escape. Suppose, now, that self is the direct object. To know is to distinguish an object from other things, and from the knowing subject. When self is the object, this distinguishing activity is exerted by the subject, while the object is self, distinguished alike from other things and from the distinguishing subject. The subject distinguishes, the object differs in being distinguished or dis-

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, 4th ed., p. 66.



cerned. Yet both subject and object, notwithstanding this formal distinction, are known in consciousness as identical. If, again, self as the subject of this activity is made the object, then it is to one form of activity, distinguished in thought from the agent, that attention is directed, while at the same time there is a consciousness that the distinction of the agent from the power or function is in thought merely, not in reality. That self-consciousness is a fact, every one can convince himself by looking within. No psychological objection, were it much more specious than the one just noticed, could avail against an experience of the fact. We are fortunately not called upon by logic to part with an "unavoidable" belief.<sup>1</sup>

To explain the complex operations of the intellect as due to a combination of units of sensation is a task sufficiently arduous. But, when it comes to the will and the moral feelings, the difficulties increase. The illusive idea of freedom, as was explained above, is supposed by Mr. Spencer to spring from the supposition that "the *ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists," — exists at the moment of action. The mistake is made of thinking that the *ego* is anything but "the entire group of psychical states which constituted the action" supposed to be free.<sup>2</sup> Yet the same writer elsewhere, and with truth, asserts that this idea of the *ego* is "verbally intelligible, but really unthinkable."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Spencer's system has been correctly described by Mansel as a union of the Positivist doctrine, that we know only the relations of phenomena, with the Pantheist assumption of the name of God to denote the Substance or Power which lies beyond phenomena.<sup>4</sup> The doctrine, which is so essential in the system, that mental phenomena emerge from nervous organism when it reaches a certain point of development, is Materialistic. Motion, heat, light, chemical affinity, Mr. Spencer holds, are transformable into sensation, emotion, thought. He holds that no idea or feeling

<sup>1</sup> This objection of Spencer is a part of Herbart's system. It is confuted by Ulrici, *Gott u. der Mensch*, pp. 321, 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. pp. 500, 501.

<sup>3</sup> *First Principles*, 4th ed., p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *The Philosophy of the Conditioned*, p. 40. "The truth is that this new philosophy owes its *monism* to the *a priori* speculations of Spinoza, while its agnosticism is borrowed from Hume and Hume's successors." Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii. p. 208.

arises save as a result of some physical force expended in producing it. "How this metamorphosis takes place; how a force existing as motion, heat, or light, can become a mode of consciousness; how it is possible for the forces liberated by chemical changes in the brain to give rise to emotion, — these are mysteries which it is impossible to fathom."<sup>1</sup> They are mysteries which ought to shake the writer's faith in the assumed fact which creates them. If forces liberated by chemical action produce thought, then thought, by the law of conservation, must exert the force thus absorbed by it. This makes thought a link in the chain of causes, giving to it an agency which the theory denies it to possess. If chemical action does not "give rise to" thought, by producing it, then it can only be an occasional cause, and the efficient cause of thought is left untold. This evolution of mind from matter as the prius, even though matter be defined as a mode of "the Unknowable," and the subjection of mental phenomena to material laws, stamp the system as essentially Materialistic. "The strict mechanical necessity of the physical side is upheld, and, as a consequence the spontaneity and purposiveness of the psychical side is declared to be illusory, a thing to be explained away."<sup>2</sup> The arguments which confute materialism are applicable to it.

Underneath modern discussions on the grounds of religious belief is the fundamental question as to the reality of human knowledge. The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge has been made one of the chief props of scepticism and atheism. If the proposition that knowledge is relative, simply means that we can know only through the organ of knowledge, it is a truism. We can know nothing of the universe as a whole, or of anything in it, beyond what the knowing agent by its constitution is capable of discerning. The important question is, whether things are known as they are, or whether they undergo a metamorphosis, converting them into things unlike themselves, by being brought into contact with the perceiving and thinking subject. It is tantamount to the question whether our mental constitution is, or is not, an instrument for perceiving truth. The idealist would explain all the objects of knowledge as modifications of the thinking subject. Knowledge is thus made an inward process, having no real coun-

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, 2d ed., p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> For the modification of Spencer's opinion, see Appendix, Note 6.

terpart in a world without. Nothing is known, nothing exists, beyond this internal process. Others, who stop short of Idealism, attribute to the mind such a transforming work upon the objects furnished it, or acting upon it from without, that their nature is veiled from discovery. The mirror of consciousness is so made that things reflected in it may, for aught we can say, lose all resemblance to things in themselves. That which is true of sense-perception, at least as regards the secondary qualities, color, flavor, etc., — which are proximately affections of man's physical organism, — is assumed to be true of all things and of their relations. This is a denial of the reality of knowledge in the sense in which the terms are taken by the common sense of mankind. The doctrine was propounded in the maxim of the Sophist, Protagoras, that "man is the measure of all things."<sup>1</sup>

Locke made sensation the ultimate source of knowledge. Berkeley withstood materialism by making sensations to be affections of the spirit, ideas impressed by the will of God, acting by uniform rule. Hume, from the premises of Locke, resolved our knowledge into sensations, which combine in certain orders of sequence, through custom, of which no explanation is to be given. Customary association gives rise to the delusive notion of necessary ideas, — such as cause and effect, substance, power, the *ego*, etc. Reid, through the doctrine of common sense, rescued rational intuitions and human knowledge, which is built on them, from the gulf of scepticism. There is another source of knowledge, a subjective source, possessed of a self-verifying authority. Kant performed a like service by demonstrating that space and time, and the ideas of cause, substance, etc., the concepts or categories of the understanding, are not the product of sense-perception. They are necessary and universal; not the product, but the condition, of sense-perception. They are presupposed in our perceptions and judgments. Moreover, Kant showed that there are ideas of reason. The mind is impelled to unify the concepts of the understanding by which it conceives, classifies, and connects the objects of knowledge. These ideas are of the world as a totality, embracing all phenomena, the *ego* or personal subject, and God, the unconditioned ground of all possible existences.

But Kant founded a scepticism of a peculiar sort. Space, time, and the categories, cause, substance, and the like, he made to be purely subjective, characteristics of the thinker, and not of the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 7.

thing. They reveal to us, not things in themselves, but rather the hidden mechanism of thought. Of the thing itself, the object of perception, we only know its existence. Even this we cannot affirm of the *ego*, which is not presented in sense-perception. The same exclusively subjective validity belongs to the other ideas of reason. They signify a tentative effort which is never complete. They designate a *nisus* which is never realized. Since the concepts of the understanding are rules for forming and ordering the materials furnished in sense-perception, they cannot be applied to anything supersensible. The attempt to do so lands us in logical contradictions, or antinomies, which is an additional proof that we are guilty of an illegitimate procedure.

From the consequences of this organized scepticism, the natural as well as actual outcome of which was the systems of Pantheistic Idealism, Kant delivered himself by his doctrine of the Practical Reason. He called attention to another department of our nature. We are conscious of a moral law, an imperative mandate, distinguished from the desires, and elevated above them. This implies, and compels us to acknowledge, the freedom of the will, and our own personality which is involved in it. Knowing that we are made for morality, and also for happiness, or that these are the ends toward which the constitution of our nature points, we must assume that there is a God by whose government these ends are made to meet, and are reconciled in a future life. God, free-will, and immortality are thus verified to us on practical grounds. Religion is the recognition of the moral law as a divine command. Religion and ethics are thus identified. Love, the contents of the law, is ignored, or retreats into the background. Rectitude in its abstract quality, or as an imperative mandate, is the sum of virtue.

The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is presented by Sir William Hamilton in a form somewhat different from the Kantian theory. The Infinite and the Absolute—existence unconditionally unlimited, and existence unconditionally limited—are neither of them conceivable. For example, we cannot conceive of infinite space, or of space so small that it cannot be divided; we cannot conceive of infinite increase or infinite division. Positive thought is of things limited or conditioned. The object is limited by its contrast with other things and by its relation to the subject. Only as thus limited can it be an object of knowledge. The object in

sense-perception is a phenomenon of the *non-ego*; the *non-ego* is a reality, but is not known as it is in itself. Thought is shut up between two inaccessible extremes. But although each is inconceivable, yet, since they are contradictories, one or the other must be accepted. For example, space must be either infinite, or bounded by ultimate limits. An essential point in Hamilton's doctrine is the distinction between conception and belief. The two are not coextensive. That may be an object of belief which is not a concept. This distinction is elucidated by Mansel, who says, "We may believe *that* a thing is, without being able to conceive *how* it is." "I believe in an infinite God; *i.e.* I believe *that* God is infinite. I believe that the attributes which I ascribe to God exist in him in an infinite degree. Now, to believe this proposition, I must be conscious of its meaning; but I am not therefore conscious of the infinite God as an object of conception; for this would require, further, an apprehension of the manner in which these infinite attributes coexist so as to form one object."<sup>1</sup> But in this case do I not *know* the meaning of "infinite"? Does it not signify more than the absence of *imaginable* limit, a mere negation of power in me? Does it not include the positive idea, that there *is* no limit? In the case of opposite inconceivables, extraneous considerations, according to Hamilton, determine which ought to be believed. Both necessity and freedom are inconceivable, since one involves an endless series, the other a new commencement; but moral feeling—self-approbation, remorse, the consciousness of obligation—oblige us to believe in freedom, although we cannot conceive of it as possible. The fact is an object of thought, and so far intelligible, but not the *quo modo*. This dilemma in which we are placed, where we have to choose between two contradictory inconceivables, does not imply that our reason is false, but that it is weak, or limited in its range. When we attempt to *conceive* of the Infinite and the Absolute, we wade beyond our depth. They are terms signifying, not thought, but the negation of thought. Our belief in the existence of God and in his perfection rests on the suggestions and demands of our moral nature. In this general view Hamilton was in accord with Kant. Mr. Mansel differed from Sir William Hamilton in holding that we have an intuition of the *ego* as an entity, and in holding that the idea of cause is a positive notion,

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of the Conditioned*, pp. 127, 129; cf. pp. 18 seq.



and not a mere inability to conceive of a new beginning, or of an addition to the sum of existence. But Mr. Mansel applied the doctrine of relativity to our knowledge of God, which was thus made to be only anthropopathic, approximative, symbolic; and he founded our belief in God ultimately on conscience and the emotions.<sup>1</sup>

Under the auspices of James Mill, and of his son John Stuart Mill, the philosophical speculations of Hume were revived. Intuitions are affirmed to be empirical in their origin. They are impressions, which through the medium of sense-perception, and under the laws of association, stamp themselves upon us in early childhood, and thus wear the semblance of *a priori* ideas. But this is only a semblance. There are, possibly, regions in the universe where two and two make five. Causation is nothing but uniformity of sequence. The Positivist theory of J. S. Mill led him to the conclusion that matter is only "the permanent possibility of sensations"; but all these groups of possibilities which constitute matter are states of the *ego*. And Mill was only prevented from concluding that the mind is nothing but a bundle of sensations by the intractable facts of memory. On his view of mind and matter, it is impossible to see how a man can know the existence of anybody but himself. He says that he does "not believe that the real externality to us of anything except other minds is capable of proof." But as we become acquainted with the existence of other minds only as we perceive their bodies, and since this perception must be held to be, like all our perceptions of matter, only a group of sensations, we have no proof that such bodies exist.

The Agnostic scheme of Herbert Spencer accords with the theory of Hume and Mill in tracing intuitions to an empirical source. But the experience which gives them being is not that of the individual, but of the race. Heredity furnishes the clew to the solution of the problem of their emergence in the consciousness of the individual. He inherits the acquisitions of remote ancestors. Then the notion of energy is superadded to the Positivist creed. With it comes the postulate of a primal Power, of which we are said to have an indefinite consciousness, or "the Unknowable," — the Pantheistic tenet grafted on Positivism. The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is taken up from Hamilton and Man-

<sup>1</sup> Respecting Matthew Arnold's conception of God, see Appendix, Note 8.

sel as the ground of nescience respecting realities as distinct from phenomena, and respecting God. The facts of conscience which have furnished to Kant and Hamilton, and to deep-thinking philosophers generally who have advocated the relativity of knowledge, a foundation for belief in free-will and for faith in God, meet with no adequate recognition. Little account is made of moral feeling, and its necessary postulates are discarded as fictions.

Our knowledge of God is *knowledge* and not an illusive semblance of knowledge. It is not meant that our knowledge is commensurate with the object—the infinite and absolute Being. The question of Zophar, “Canst thou by searching find out God?” is explained by what immediately follows, “Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” Knowledge may be very limited, yet real as far as it goes. But it is not even meant that the present forms of our knowledge of God correspond literally to the reality. With the expansion of knowledge, the symbols that now express it may be modified, may even be superseded. What is meant, in opposition to Agnosticism, is that they are substantially true. In them the reality is bodied forth up to the measure of our finite capacity at this stage of our existence. This position is at a world-wide remove from that sort of Agnosticism—that species of phenomenalism—which can be called knowledge only by an utter perversion of the ordinary understanding of the word.

A very acute critic of Mr. Spencer, speaking of his use of the distinction of appearance and reality, a “distinction which has ever been the stronghold of Agnosticism,” and of his confining strict knowledge to “appearances behind which God remains wholly and forever concealed as Inscrutable Reality,” writes thus: “We have allowed that strict knowing, if it is to mean the resolution of the course of Nature into coexistence and succession, and these again into a world-formula in terms of matter and motion, does not reveal God at all, or mind of any sort. . . . But if we decline to call anything an appearance, unless it is either perceived or perceptible, why then should we attach to it the bad sense of concealing, rather than the good sense of revealing? Why should appearances not be reality? How can reality appear, shine forth, and yet remain totally and forever beyond the knowledge of those to whom it appears? Let us turn, as we have done before, to

the case we know best — the communication of one human mind with another. Assuming good faith, we never regard a man's acts and utterances as masking, but rather as manifesting the man. If they mask when it is his intention to deceive, surely they cannot also mask when his intentions are the precise opposite. These acts and utterances may be beyond the comprehension of men on a lower intellectual level, and with narrower horizons, but they are not the less real and true on that account. And why should we argue differently, when reflection leads us to see in a universe declared to be 'everywhere alive' the manifestations of a Supreme Mind?"<sup>1</sup>

The rescue of philosophy from its aberrations must begin in a full and consistent recognition of the reality of knowledge. Intuitions are the counterpart of realities. The categories are objective; they are modes of existence as well as modes of knowledge. Distinct as mind and nature are, there is such an affinity in the constitution of both, and such an adaptation of each to each, that knowledge is not a bare product of subjective activity, but a reflex of reality. Dependent existences imply independent self-existent Being. The postulate of all causal connection discerned among finite things is the First Cause. From the will we derive our notion of causation. Among dependent existences the will is the only fountain of power of which we have any experience. It is reasonable to believe that the First Cause is a Will. The First Cause is disclosed as personal in conscience, to which our wills are subject. The law as an imperative impulse to free action and as a preappointed end implies that the First Cause is Personal. Order and design in the world without — not found there merely, but instinctively sought there — corroborate the evidence of God, whose being is implied in our self-consciousness, and whose holy authority is manifest in conscience.

<sup>1</sup> Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii. p. 275.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY EVINCED IN ITS ADAPTEDNESS TO THE DEEPEST NECESSITIES OF MAN

EVERY religion has to undergo a practical test. It verifies or disproves itself in the degree in which it answers to the spiritual nature and wants of man. Christianity does not come forward as a new philosophy having for its primary end the solving of speculative problems. It professes, to be sure, to be in accord with reason. It claims to rest upon a truly rational conception of the universal system of which man is a component part. But it also founds its title to confidence on more practical grounds. It appeals immediately to the conscience and the affections. It calls for a rectification of the will. It promises to minister to necessities of human nature which pertain in common to men of the most exalted intelligence and to minds of the humblest cast. In its adaptedness to such deep-felt necessities, which spring out of man's constitution and condition, which cleave to him as a finite, moral, responsible being who looks forward to death, and, with more or less of hope or of dread, to a life hereafter—in this adaptedness lies a proof of its truth and supernatural parentage. If Christianity is found to be matched to human nature as no other system can pretend to be, and as cannot be accounted for by any wisdom of which man of himself is capable, then we are justified in referring it to God as its author. In the proportion in which this fitness of Christianity to the constitution, the cravings, the distress, of the soul, to man's highest and holiest aspirations, becomes a matter of living experience, the force of the argument will be appreciated. It will be understood in the degree in which it is felt. Here the data of the inference are drawn from experiences of the heart. The impressions which carry one to this conclusion are contingent on the state of the sensibility, the activity and health of conscience, and the bent of the will. The conclusion itself is one to which the soul advances

spontaneously ; one in which, rational though it be, the affections and the will are the determining factors.

There is in the human spirit a profound need of God. This grows out of the fact that we are not only finite, but consciously finite, and not sufficient for ourselves. But, whether the source of it is reflected on or not, this need of a connection with the Eternal and Divine is felt. In reality, the hunger for God, whether it be consciously recognized or not, is deeper in the heart than any other want of human nature ; for example, than the instinct that craves friendship, or that impels to the creation of domestic ties, or that inspires a thirst for knowledge. The need of God may be, it often is, latent, undefined. It stirs in the soul below the clear light of consciousness. Its very vagueness has the effect to send man off in pursuit of a variety of finite objects, which are sought for the sake of filling the void, the true significance of which is not yet discerned. Now it is wealth, now it is honor and fame and power, now it is the acquisitions of science. Or it may be sensual pleasure, or the entertainment afforded by social intercourse, or any one of myriad sorts of diversion. The different sorts of earthly good, when worthy of esteem, are estimated beyond the value which experience finds in them. When they are gained, disappointment ensues. The void within is not filled. If these remarks are commonplace, their very triteness demonstrates their truth. In childhood, we find the world into which life is opening sufficient. We do not tire of its novelty. The future stretches before us with a seemingly infinite attraction. The charm of mystery is spread over it. The scene captivates by its variety. In the human beings about us, in the spectacles presented for the eye to gaze on, in the work and in the play that await us at each day's dawn, there is enough. It is only in exceptional instances, in the case of unusually thoughtful and deep-souled children, that there appears a sacred discontent with the things that are comprised in the life about them. When we emerge out of immaturity, there will arise within us a sense of the unsatisfactoriness of existence — a feeling not in the least cynical, not always, certainly, due to disappointments, though experiences of hardship and bereavement, or of whatever makes the heart ache, do certainly aggravate the discontent of the soul. It may be that there will coexist an inexpressible feeling of loneliness. There is a reaching out for something larger than human love can provide,



and for something which human love, when tasted to the full, leaves unsupplied. Study, travel, absorption in pleasant labor, experiments in quest of happiness from this or that source, much as they may do to drive away temporarily the feeling of want, fail to pacify it permanently. A thirst, slaked for the day, revives on the morrow. There is a cry in the soul, even if not so articulate as to be distinctly heard by the soul itself, to which the world makes no response. Gifted minds which of set purpose shut their ears to this voice within have their moments in which they cannot avoid hearing it. Goethe is one of the most prominent examples of the deliberate purpose to confine the attention within the finite realm, and to live upon the delights of art, literature, science, love. Whatever could disturb the repose of the spirit, the dark side of mortal experience, harassing questions respecting the future, he would banish from thought. Yet this serene man said to his friend: "I have ever been esteemed one of fortune's chiefest favorites; nor can I complain of the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and in my seventy-fifth year I may say that I have never had four weeks of genuine pleasure. The stone was ever to be rolled up anew."<sup>1</sup> Rest was not attained. There was a lurking sense that the peace which came and went had no perennial source. "We may lean for a while," he once said, "on our brothers and friends, be amused by acquaintances, rendered happy by those we love; but in the end man is always driven back upon himself. And it seems as if the divinity had so placed himself in relation to man as not always to respond to his reverence, trust, and love; *at least in the terrible moment of need.*" "There had then been," writes Mr. Hutton, in his thoughtful Essay on Goethe, "there had then been a time when the easy familiarity with which the young man scrutinized the universe had been exchanged for the humble glance of the heart-stricken child; and he had shrunk away from that time (as he did from every hour of life when pain would have probed to the very bottom the secrets of his nature), to take refuge in the exercise of a faculty which would have been far stronger and purer, had it never helped him to evade those awful pauses in existence when alone the depths of our personal life lie bare before the inward eye, and we start to see both 'whither we are going, and whence we came.' Goethe deliberately turned his back upon

<sup>1</sup> Eckermann, *Conversations of Goethe*, p. 76.

those inroads which sin and death make into our natural habits and routine. From the pleading griefs, from the challenging guilt, from the warning shadows, of his own past life, he turned resolutely away, like his own Faust, to the alleviating occupations of the present. Inch by inch he contested the inroads of age upon his existence, striving to banish the images of new graves from his thoughts long before his nature had ceased to quiver with the shock of parting ; never seemingly for a moment led by grief to take conscious refuge in the love of God and his hopes of a hereafter.”<sup>1</sup>

It is sometimes made a reproach to Christianity that it is a refuge of the weak, the disappointed, the desponding. But a full proportion of its disciples have been won from the ranks of men of even marked virility. But the question is whether the realities of existence are not best discerned from the point of view gained by those who have experience of pain — whether the mental vision of such is not clearer.

Not long after the death of his wife, Thomas Carlyle wrote to his friend, Erskine of Linlathen, as follows : —

“‘Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,’ — what else can we say ? The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis, as if written and shining for me in mild pure splendor on the black bosom of the night there ; when I, as it were, read them, word by word, with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure that was most unexpected. Not perhaps for thirty or forty years had I ever formally repeated that prayer ; nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of man’s soul it is, — the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor human nature ; right worthy to be recommended with an, ‘After this manner pray ye.’”

The just criticism of Goethe brings us to another deep feeling of the human soul, — a more solemn experience, a more imperious need. The yearning of the finite soul for an infinite good is not its most agonizing emotion. The craving which an intelligent creature, however pure, would feel, — the craving for an object commensurate with its boundless desires, — is far from comprising the whole need of man. A self-accusation, moreover, sooner or later, with more or less persistency, haunts the

<sup>1</sup> Hutton’s *Essays*, vol. ii. (*Literary*), p. 77.

soul. It may exist only as an uneasy suspicion. It will frequently arise in connection with special instances of wrong-doing, or of neglect of duty in relation to other men. One finds himself reproached within for being selfish in his conduct. The consciousness of secret purposes which his moral sense condemns inspires him with a feeling of unworthiness and of shame. He falls below his own ideals; he detects in himself a lack of courage, of truth, of purity, of magnanimity, of loyalty to the just claims of relatives, or of neighbors, or of society at large. Epochs are reached in the course of life when, as he glances backward over a long period, cherished habits of feeling rise in memory to condemn him. Self-accusation may go so far as to induce self-loathing. The more he probes his own character, the more aware does he become that there is something perverse at the very core. He is living to the world, is making the good which the world yields, or self-gratification in a more gross or more refined form, the goal and end of his striving. Not only is he without God, he is alienated from him; and in this alienation, carrying in it an idolatry of the creature and of finite good, he discerns the root of the evil that is in him. Then the sense of guilt attaches itself to the impiety or ungodliness out of which, as an innermost fountain, flows a defiled stream of ethical misconduct. We are drawing no fancy picture. The sense of unworthiness is not a morbid experience. It is not confined to transient moods; it is not limited to characters of exceptional depravity; it does not belong alone to men of the spiritual elevation of Pascal and Luther, of Augustine and Edwards; it does not pertain to one nation exclusively, or to any single branch of the human family; it is not an artificial product of the teaching of Christianity, or of any other of the religions that have prevailed on the earth. It is a human experience, giving, therefore, the most diversified manifestations of its presence in the confessions of individuals, in poetry, and in other forms of literature, in penances, sacrifices, and other rites of worship. The "whole world is guilty before God," and in varying degrees sensible of the fact, despite the obtuseness of conscience which the practice of evil-doing engenders, the natural efforts to stifle so humiliating and painful an emotion, the partially successful devices to divert the attention from it, and the sophistry which labors to make it seem unreal.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this subject, see Appendix, Note 9.

Then the sense of being without God is converted into a sense of estrangement from Him. The feeling of responsibility for sin, while it brings God more vividly to mind, awakens the consciousness of being excluded from communion with Him. The sense of condemnation drives one away from God, and yet compels the thought of Him. The soul hides itself "among the trees of the garden," yet is followed, and held, and mysteriously attracted by the offended Being from whom it has chosen to separate itself.

Besides a sense of unworthiness there is a consciousness of bondage. It may be that particular habits, which the will has suffered to gain control, have now come to be felt as a chain. Sensual appetite in one form or another, vanity, ungovernable resentment, covetousness, or some other base purpose or corrupt form of conduct — may have established a mastery, which, when the conviction of guilt arises, and with it discontent, is felt as a galling tyranny. If there be no single predominant passion, the general principle of worldliness which has enthroned the creature in the place of the Creator oppresses the soul that has now awoke to a perception of its culpable and abnormal state. Struggles to break loose from the yoke of habit — which has become bound up with the laws of association that determine the current of thought, has enslaved the affections, and taken captive the will — prove ineffectual. "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I"; or, as the heathen poet expresses it, —

"Video meliora proboque;  
Deteriora sequor."

Of course the struggle against inward evil may be weak, but in strong and earnest natures it may amount to an agony. The insurrection against the power to which the will has yielded itself may rend the soul as a kingdom is torn by civil strife. The unaided effort at self-emancipation turns out to be fruitless. It is the vain struggle of Laocoön in the coils of the serpent. It may end in a despairing submission to the enemy.

But this description does not complete the account of the experience of the soul in its relations to God, as long as it is yet practically ignorant of the gospel. The *misery* of human life must be taken into consideration. Where there is youth, health, prosperity, and the buoyancy of spirits which is natural under these circum-

stances, there is commonly but a slight appreciation of the countless forms of distress from which even the most favored class of mankind do not escape. It is possible, to be sure, to understate the amount of happiness in the world of mankind. That there is no sunshine in human life, even in situations that are adverse, only a cynic would be disposed to deny. But he is equally blind to facts who fails to recognize that the earthly life of men is a scene which abounds in trouble, in pain of body and anguish of spirit, in hearts lacerated by fellow-beings who have been loved and trusted, made sore by bereavement, anxious with numberless cares, often weary or half-weary with the burden of toil and the bitterness of grief. Then there approaches every household and every individual the dark shadow of death. The love of life is an instinct so strong that only in exceptional cases is it fully overborne by the pressure of despondency. Yet death stands waiting. More than half of the race expire in infancy. Before every individual is the prospect of this inevitable event, which he endeavors to avert and to postpone as long as possible, all the while, however, aware that his painstaking will at length be fruitless. The feelings sketched above are not peculiar to any single generation. They are not the result, as they are sometimes said to be, of a gloom engendered by Christian teaching. He who imagines that life of old was nothing but sunshine, has forgotten his Homer and a thousand pathetic laments strewn through the noblest literature of antiquity.

None but the superstitious consider that pain and affliction are distributed in strict proportion to transgression, and that the happiest lot falls uniformly to the least unworthy. But, while this notion is abandoned as a falsehood of superstition, we may recognize in it the distortion of a truth which is embedded in the convictions of mankind, — the truth that natural evil and moral evil are connected in the system of things ; that one is the concomitant and shadow of the other ; that suffering, to a large extent, to say the least, is a part of a retributive order. Certain it is, that pain and sorrow tend to provoke self-judgment and that feeling of ill-desert which is inseparable from conscious impiety and selfishness. The presage of judgment arises spontaneously in the soul. Especially the prospect of death is apt to excite remorseful apprehension. The vivid presentiment of retribution to come, or an undefined dread of this nature, springs up unbidden in the



mind, in the presence of that solemn crisis which breaks up our present form of being, and sends the spirit out of its fleshly tenement into the world beyond. To a mind haunted by reproaches of conscience, death itself wears a penal aspect; it is felt to be something incongruous, a violent rupture of a bond, which, if dissolved at all, we might look to see loosened by a gentler process, by a transition not attended with the pangs of dissolution.

When the moral and spiritual perceptions have thus been quickened, the mind is struck with the fact that Christianity, as set forth in the Scriptures, recognizes to the full extent all the facts which it has been aroused to discern. Not only are they admitted in the Scriptures, and spread out with no attempt to disguise them: they are insisted on, and are set forth with a startling impressiveness. An individual thus awakened to the realities of existence finds depicted there man's need of God,—his thirst for God,—and the futility of seeking to slake the thirst of the soul for the Infinite from any earthly fountains of pleasure. "Why do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" What is unworthy in human character and conduct he finds proclaimed there with a piercing emphasis. There is no extenuation of human guilt, whether as connected with immorality or with ungodliness. Every disguise is stripped off. The actual condition of men, as regards the sufferings to which all are exposed, and those from which none escape, is very often referred to and is everywhere latently assumed. Death is held up to view as the goal which all are approaching. The real source of the "sting of death" is brought out. The foreboding of conscience, the product of the sense of ill desert, is distinctly sanctioned in a solemn affirmation of coming judgment. In short, the malady of the soul, in all its characteristic features, is laid bare in a way to evoke and intensify the spiritual needs and fears which have been adverted to. This outspokenness of the Bible, this unmasking of the evil and of the danger, invites confidence. The diagnosis is unsparing. It suggests at least the hope that where the disorder is so fully understood, an adequate remedy will not be wanting.

The need of the soul is RECONCILIATION. This is the first want of which it is conscious. It needs to be brought near to God, and into personal communion with Him, through Forgiveness. It needs, moreover, help from without, that it may subdue the principle of sin and attain the freedom of a willing loyalty. It needs

deliverance from death, as far as death is an object of dread either in itself or for what is feared in connection with it.

How can one who is in this mood fail to be deeply impressed at the outset by the circumstance, that, while the Scriptures assert without palliation the guilt of sin and the righteous displeasure of God on account of it, they at the same time announce, not an inevitable perdition, but a complete rescue? There is a proclamation of "good tidings." First, there is the momentous announcement of a merciful Approach made by God to the race of mankind. This simple declaration, apart from methods and details, will excite a profound interest. The initiative in the work of deliverance has been taken by Him from whom alone forgiveness and deliverance can proceed. Then comes the explicit announcement of a mission of a SAVIOUR. There is a manifestation of God to men through a man; a man, yet in such an intimacy of union to God, that his most fit designation is "the Son of God,"—a union such that no one knows the Father but the Son, and whoever has seen him may be said to have seen the Father,—a union the mysterious springs of which precede his life among men. He brings a proclamation of the pardon of sin. The fatherliness of God, never absolutely withdrawn by Him who is "kind to the evil and the unthankful," is brought into the foreground. Ill-desert is to be no barrier to the coming back of the estranged to the Father's house and heart. Death need no longer be an object of dismal foreboding. It is converted into a doorway to an immortal life hereafter. All this is *said* by the divine Messenger. But the redemption thus declared is represented as *achieved* by him. A man among men, born of woman, subject like ourselves to temptation, absolutely identifying himself with his race in sympathy, not less than with the condemnation felt by God for the sin of mankind, he makes a free, absolute surrender of his own will to the Father's will, with every new access of trial raises this surrender to a higher pitch, carries human nature victoriously through life, and through the anguish of an undeserved death,—the final test of loyalty to God and of devotion to men, willingly endured because it is a cup given him of the Father to drink. In that death is the life of the world. Here is the response of Christianity to the call of the conscience and heart for an Atonement for sin. Through death the Saviour rises to a consummated life, invisible,—to the vantage-ground whence to ex-

tend his life-giving power to draw men to himself and to make them partakers of his own perfection, to begin now and to be fully realized hereafter.

Jesus came to plant within the soul a life of filial union to God. In the assured confidence and peace of that life there would be a conscious superiority to the world, an independence of the changes and chances of this mortal state. In that life of heavenly trust, fears and anxieties of an earthly nature would lose their power to break the calm of the spirit. There would inhere in it a power to overcome the world. Resentful passions would die out in the recollection of the heavenly Father's patience and forgiving love, and in the sense of the inestimable worth and the possibility of perfection that belong to every soul, however unworthy. A secret life, serene in the midst of sorrow and danger, a perennial fountain of rest, and stimulus to kindly and beneficent exertion,—such was the gift of Christ to men. "My peace I give unto you." This life he first realized in himself. He maintained and perfected it through conflict. He imparts it through the channel of personal union and fellowship.<sup>1</sup> Christian serenity leaves room for the full flow and warmth of all human sympathies and affections. The follower of Christ is empowered to use the world without abusing it, or being enslaved to it. He is not obliged to fling away the good gifts of God; but, by making them servants instead of masters, he can enjoy, and yet can forego, that which he possesses. He carries within him a treasure sufficient when all else is lost.

How shall this adaptedness in Christianity to man's spiritual being be accounted for? Can it be attributed to the Nazarene and to the group of fishermen who followed him, they being credited with no more than a merely human insight? Is there not reason to conclude that a higher than human agency, even a divine wisdom and will, was active in this great movement? Leaving out of view other kinds of proof, as that from testimony to miracles, the practical argument for the supernatural origin of Christianity, from its proving itself the counterpart of human need and the satisfaction of the soul's highest aspirations, is one difficult to controvert. It is of a piece with the response of the man born blind, who replied to the objections of the Pharisees, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As set forth in that classic, *The Imitation of Christ*.

<sup>2</sup> John ix. 25.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DIVINE MISSION OF JESUS ATTESTED BY THE TRANSFORMING AGENCY OF CHRISTIANITY IN HUMAN SOCIETY

IN the preceding chapter we have touched on the adaptedness of Christianity to minister to the needs and yearnings of the individual. We have now to glance at the power and beneficence of Christianity as evinced in the broader field of history.

Not the supernatural origin of a religion, nor even its truth, can be decided by the number of its adherents : else Buddhism, with its four hundred and fifty millions, would hold the vantage-ground over against Christianity with its four hundred millions ; and Mohammedanism, with its one hundred and seventy-five millions, might put in a plausible claim to a higher than human derivation. It is necessary to consider in what way the converts of a religion have been won. Mohammedanism was a fanatical crusade against idolatry, that achieved its success by the sword and by the fierce energy with which it was wielded. Force was exerted, to some extent, for the spread of Christianity by the successors of Constantine ; and force has been exerted in other instances, like that of the conquest of the Saxons by Charlemagne : yet there is no doubt that coercion — which, it may be observed, was used in the cause of Buddhism by the kings who embraced it — has, on the whole, hindered, instead of helped on, the progress of the gospel. The victory of the religion of the cross in the Roman Empire was really gained by moral means. The reactionary movement of Julian proved futile, for the reason that the faith which it attempted to succor was in a moribund state. When we consider the small beginnings of Christianity, in its Galilean birthplace, and watch its progress against the organized and violent opposition of Judaism, and the successive attempts to extirpate it made by imperial Rome, from the cruelties of Nero and Domitian to the systematic persecution by Diocletian, its triumph over the ancient heathenism excites a wonder that is not lessened by theories which

have been invented to explain it. All the proximate causes of the downfall and disappearance of the Græco-Roman religion, through the preaching of the gospel, presuppose behind them, as the ultimate cause, the personal influence of Jesus Christ and his life and death. When we see the same gospel, amid the ruins of the Roman Empire, subduing to itself the victorious barbarian tribes by whom it was overthrown, we get a new impression of the mysterious efficacy that resides in it. An Asiatic religion in its origin, it became the religion of Europe. Yet its adaptedness to races beyond the limits of the Aryan peoples has likewise been fully demonstrated.

But in order to complete the argument for the truth and divine origin of Christianity, drawn from its effect, we must go farther, and investigate the particular character of that effect. The impression which the spread of the other religions — whether the national faiths, like the native religions of China, or the universal systems, Mohammedanism and Buddhism — might leave upon us is largely neutralized when we mark the character and limit of the influence exerted by them on human nature, culture, and civilization. We may, to be sure, recognize enough of good to prove that those religions inculcated important truths. We may discern a value in the moral and religious sentiments which they partially express and respond to. But the idea that any of those religions is the absolute religion, or the religion revealed from Heaven to be the perpetual light of men, is dispelled the moment we find that the work wrought by them upon the human soul is one-sided and defective, and that their final result is an arrested development. The individual is impelled forward to a certain limit. There he halts. Even deterioration may ensue. The nation feels a transforming agency for a time, but at length it reaches an impassable barrier. An imperfect civilization becomes petrified. Christianity, on the contrary, never appears to have exhausted its power. It moves in advance, and beckons forward the individual and the people who embrace it. When it is misconceived in some respect, and a partly perverted development ensues, it frequently develops a rectifying power. It forever instigates to reform: its only goal is perfection.

We are not to forget that gradualness in the transforming effect of the Gospel is the character attributed by Jesus himself to its progress and influence in the world. It was to be first the



blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.<sup>1</sup> It was to grow as the seed of the mustard plant.<sup>2</sup> It was to operate in the heart of society, on its institutions, habits, and sentiments, like the yeast hidden in the "measures of meal."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the consequence of this nature of the gospel—of what seems a slow conquest and spread, of the imperfect discernment of its meaning, and the moral defects of its disciples—was foreseen and predicted.<sup>4</sup> It is to be remembered that their sins as individuals, and especially crimes committed, even such as cruel persecution of fellow-Christians, are chargeable not to real Christianity, but to misconceptions of it.

We are not to forget, of course, that Christendom is something besides a religion. It is composed of particular races—races having distinctive traits which have entered as one factor into the spiritual life and the civilization of this society of peoples. They have inherited from the past, especially from the Roman Empire and the cultivated nations of antiquity, invaluable elements of polity and culture. The Teutonic peoples were specially hospitable to the religion of the gospel. They were docile, as well as virile. They had these native traits to begin with: they received much, besides the gift of Christian faith, from those whom they conquered. Yet it is Christianity which leavened all. It is Christianity which fused, moulded, trained, the European nations. It is in the light of Christianity that their vigorous life unfolded itself. In that light it still flourishes.

Jesus Christ brought into the world a new ideal of man—man individual and man social. This was not all. Had this been all, the condition of men might not have been materially altered. He brought in at the same time a force adequate to effect—though not magically, but by slow degrees—the realization of this ideal. It is in its double character—in the perfection of the moral ideal, and in the wonderful stimulus to the practical realization of it—that the transcendent superiority of the Christian religion is manifest. The sages of antiquity presented high though always imperfect conceptions of what man and society should be; but those conceptions remained inoperative. They did not avail for the elevation of many individuals even. Their effect on social and political life was small. Culture was attained by the intellectual and versatile Greek, but the ideal of manhood was faulty. Truth-

<sup>1</sup> Mark iv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiii. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 34 *seq.*

fulness, "the gold of character," was not one of his characteristic virtues. There was no life-giving force to save the Greek from degeneracy and corruption. No more was there a saving power in the law and polity which Rome created. Neither Greek learning and philosophy, nor Roman politics and jurisprudence, could rescue mankind from degradation, or even keep up what power they had exerted.

With Christ there came in a nobler ideal and a force to lift men up to it. That force resided in Jesus himself. The central thought of Jesus was religion — man's relation to God. Take out this idea of man's true life as consisting in that filial relation to the heavenly Father, and the vital principle is lost from the system of Jesus. The sources of its power are dried up: the root is dead, and the branches wither away.

For with this idea is inseparably connected his estimate of the worth of the soul. Every individual, according to the teaching of Christ, has an incalculable worth. This does not depend on his outward condition. Lazarus, the beggar at the gate, was on a footing of equality with Dives at his luxurious table. To the surprise of the disciples, Jesus conversed with a peasant woman at a well. What was a woman, and a poor woman, even a depraved woman, that the Master should waste time in order to enlighten her? Little children he took in his arms when the disciples "forbade them." It was not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish. The transgressor of human and divine law, the male or female outcast—he saw in each something of imperishable value. With this idea of the worth of man, there is associated the recognition of every individual as an end in himself. No man is made merely to enhance the interests, or minister to the gratification, of another man. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*." He is the greatest who has most of the spirit of self-sacrifice. For one man to use another man or a woman as an instrument of his own pleasure or advancement, is an act of inconceivable cruelty and baseness. The equality of men as regards worth or value, be their talents, property, station, power, or condition in any particular what they may, is a cardinal truth. It is a deduction from their common relation, as creatures and children, to God, and from the common benefit of redemption, in which all alike share. In the community of God's children there was no distinction of bondman or freeman, rich or poor, male or female,

Greek or barbarian. All — be their nationality that of the strong and intellectual branches of mankind, or of those little esteemed ; be their lot among the prosperous or the unfortunate — are on a level. They are "brethren."

The Christian ideal embraced the sanctification of the entire life. It did not subvert established relations between man and man, as far as they were conformed to nature and right. It infused into them a new spirit. It set to work not to pull down, but to purify, the family and the state, and to raise each of these institutions to the ideal standard. Each was to be led to fulfil its true function, and to become a fountain of the highest possible beneficence.

One of the great changes which Christianity made, and is making, in the family, is the abolition of domestic tyranny. The authority of the father in ancient Rome, as in many other nations, was without limit. As far as restraints of law were concerned, he was a despot in the household. He had over its members the right to inflict death. From the time of the introduction of Christianity, the authority of the father began to be reduced. In the second century the paternal prerogative, the *patria potestas*, was curtailed in the Roman law. The Stoic ethical teaching contributed to this result, as to other humane reforms. How far milder sentiments that were shared by the Stoics in the early Christian centuries were unconsciously imbibed from the gospel, which was already active in modifying the atmosphere of thought and feeling, is a question difficult to settle. This is certain, that Christian teaching from the beginning tended strongly to such a result, and evidently, at a later date, had a powerful effect. The more Christianity gained influence, the position of the wife in relation to the husband's will and control was wholly changed for the better. The freedom of divorce which existed by Roman law and custom met in the precepts of Christ and in the teaching of the Church a stern rebuke. The wife could no longer be discarded in obedience to the husband's caprice. Marriage became a sacred bond — a bond, except for one cause, indissoluble. Of the immeasurable influence which the religion of Jesus has exerted in shielding the purity of woman, it is needless to speak. The power which the unsparing injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount have exercised for the defence of the helpless and innocent against lawless passion, it would be impossible to estimate. As fast as Christianity spread, respect for the rights of woman extended. The

more deeply Christianity leavens society, the more does all unjust discrimination in laws and social customs, by which their rights and privileges have been abridged, disappear. The words of Jesus on the cross, when he committed his mother to the care of John, have inspired in all subsequent ages a tender feeling for the sorrows of woman. If reverence for the Virgin was at length exaggerated, and became a hurtful superstition, that unauthorized worship was connected with a sentiment toward the wife and mother which genuine Christianity fosters.

The State is the second great institution having a divine sanction, and springing out of essential tendencies and needs of human nature. It is one of the most remarkable features of Christianity, and one of the marked signs that a wisdom higher than that of man was concerned in it, that from the first it asserted the inviolable authority of the civil magistracy. There was all the temptation that religious zeal could afford, to cast off the rule of the State. This temptation was aggravated a thousand-fold by the circumstance that against the early Christians the civil powers arrayed themselves in mortal antipathy. Yet from the beginning the injunction was to honor the ruler. Nay, he was declared to be the minister of God for the execution of justice. Civil government was affirmed to be a part and instrument of God's moral government of mankind. Christians were to pray for the ruler at the very time when Nero was burning them alive. No priestly usurpation in later periods, when it was carried to its height, was ever able to extirpate in the Christian mind the feeling of obligation to obey the magistrate, and the conviction that the powers that be are ordained of God. Christianity exalted justice, and revered the State as its divinely appointed upholder between man and man. Christianity honored rightful authority, and recognized it as committed to the rulers of a political community.

At the same time, the religion of Christ brought in liberty. Wherever it has been understood aright, it has been the most powerful champion and safeguard of natural and political rights. In heathen antiquity the State was supreme, and practically omnipotent. The individual was absorbed in the political body of which he was a member. To that body he owed unlimited allegiance. There was no higher law than the behest of the State. Socrates is one instance of an individual refusing, out of deference to the Divine Will, to obey a prohibition of the State. He would



not promise to refrain from teaching when he might have saved his life by doing so. We meet here and there with a shining example of one who was ready to disregard a civil mandate which required of him some flagrant act of injustice. But these are exceptions that prove the rule. They are anticipations of a better era than existed, or could exist, as long as polytheism was dominant, and while there was no broader form of social unity than the civil community. Christianity founded a new kingdom. It was a kingdom not of this world ; but it was a real sovereignty, which was felt to be supreme over all human enactments. The first preachers of the gospel felt obliged to obey God rather than man. The early Christians had to disobey the laws and decrees of the Jewish and the Roman authorities. It was a new thing when prisoners who were brought before Roman prefects, and commanded to worship the image of the emperor or to curse Christ, refused, and persistently refused, to do so. Such contumacy, such insubordination, struck these administrators of law as a marvel of audacity and of treasonable hostility to the supreme authority. By this means, through that higher allegiance to the revealed will of God, which Christianity made a widespread, practical fact, the power of the State, up to that time virtually boundless, was cut down to reasonable proportions. The precepts of the State were subjected to the private judgment of the subject. The individual decided whether or not they were consistent with the laws of the King of kings. He inquired whether they enjoined what God had forbidden, or forbade what God had enjoined. The eternal laws of justice and right, of which Sophocles wrote in the highest strain of Greek religious thought, became, in the Christian Church, the everyday, absolute arbiter of conduct. There might spring up a new despotism. There might grow up an ecclesiastical authority not less tyrannical than the State had been. But this could only be a temporary abuse and perversion. Christian truth could not be permanently eclipsed. Meantime, even in the days when ecclesiastical control over the individual was overgrown, it still afforded a most wholesome check to the unrestrained power of chieftains and kings. The Papacy, in the periods when it mistakenly strove to govern the laity with a supreme sway, and even to build up a universal monarchy of its own, a spiritual despotism, did, nevertheless, do a vast service in its unceasing assertion of a spiritual law above the will of any man, however strong, and of the right of spiritual ideas to



prevail over brute force. Guizot, speaking of the period which ensued upon the fall of the Western Empire, says, "Had the Christian Church not existed, the whole world must have been abandoned to purely material force."<sup>1</sup> When Christianity had liberated the human mind from the yoke of secular power, it proved itself enlightened enough and strong enough to emancipate it from the yoke of the ecclesiastical institution through which, in great part, that deliverance had been achieved.

Looking at the constitution of the State itself, we see plainly how Christianity has introduced, and tends to introduce, a just measure of political liberty, and a fair distribution of political power. The constitution of the Church as its Founder established it, the fraternal equality of its members, the mutual respect for opinion and preference which was enjoined, the forbidding of a lordship like that which existed in secular society — all tended strongly to bring analogous ideas and parallel relations into the civil community. Liberty was prized by the ancients; but what sort of liberty? At Athens, the citizens were but a handful compared with the entire population. In Rome, citizenship was a privilege jealously guarded by the select possessors of it. When, at last, political equality was attained, it was through the absolute rule of the emperors, after liberty had vanished. Christianity presents no abstract pattern of civil society. It prescribes no such doctrine as that of universal suffrage. But Christianity, by the respect which it pays to man as man, by its antipathy to unjust or artificial distinctions, by its whole genius and spirit, favors those forms of polity in which all men of competent intelligence, who have a stake in the well-being of the community, are allowed to have some voice in its government. So far, Christianity is not a neutral in the contests relative to political rights and privileges. As concerns natural rights, which are always to be carefully distinguished from political, the religion of Christ continually protests against every violation of justice in the laws and institutions of society. The Golden Rule it holds to be not less applicable to those acts of the community which determine the relations of its members to one another than to the private intercourse of individuals. Who that examines the governments of Christian nations to-day can fail to see what a mighty influence Christianity has

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the History of Civilization*, ch. ii. p. 38.

already exerted in moulding civil society into a conformity with human rights and with the rational conception of equality?

Christianity fundamentally alters the view which is taken of international relations. Slowly, but steadily, it makes mankind feel that injustice is not less base when exercised between nation and nation than between man and man. Prior to the Christian era, the more closely the members of a tribe or people were bound together, the more regardless they generally were of the rights and the welfare of all beyond their borders. Pretexts were easily found — very often they were not even sought — for enterprises of conquest and pillage. As intercourse increased, and commerce spread, there was required some mutual recognition of rights. Covenants were made, and sometimes were kept. Occasional glimpses of a better order of things, in which mankind should be regarded as a kind of confederacy, were gained by Stoic philosophers. Such ideas were now and then thrown out by rhetorical writers on politics and morals, like Cicero. But international law existed only in its rudiments. Selfishness was the practical rule of national conduct. The strong domineered over the weak. Christianity subordinated even patriotism to the law of righteousness and human brotherhood. It insisted on the responsibility of the nation, in its corporate capacity, to God, the Father of all. It held up a nobler ideal for the regulation of nations in their mutual intercourse. It need not be said how much remains to be done in order that the Christian law should be even approximately carried out. Yet the contrast between the Christendom of to-day and the spectacle presented by the tribes and nations of antiquity is like the contrast between winter and spring. In the middle ages, the Church, as an organized body, through the clergy, undertook to pacify contention, and curb the appetite for aggression. Vast good was accomplished, but a new species of tyranny incidentally came in. In modern days, equitable treaties, amicable negotiations, and, above all, arbitration, are resorted to more and more, for the settlement of disputes, the redress of wrongs, and the prevention of war. Ambition and greed do not avail to expel from thought the ideal of the gospel. If clouded for a while, it reappears in its full effulgence. Christianity does not absolutely forbid war, as it does not prohibit, but rather approves, the use of force for the maintenance of law within the limits of each community. But against all wars of aggression, against all wars which

might have been avoided by forbearance and reasonable concession, the religion of Jesus lifts up a warning voice, which is more and more heard. A glance at the history of Christianity, and at the present condition of the world, makes it manifest that a mighty force is incessantly at work in the bosom of mankind, which promises at last to bring in an era when righteousness shall prevail in the dealings of the nations with one another, and men shall learn war no more.

The work which Christianity has done in the cause of charity, of kindness and beneficence, constitutes a topic of extreme interest. There was charity before the gospel. Men were never brutes. There was compassion; there was a recognized duty of hospitality to strangers. Among the Greeks, Jupiter was the protector of strangers and suppliants. There were not absolutely wanting combined efforts in doing good. Institutions of charity have not been entirely unknown in heathen nations. In China there have long existed, in the different provinces, hospitals for two classes, — for old people and for foundlings. In ancient times men were not indisposed to befriend their own countrymen. This was preëminently true of the Jews. Among the heathen, in various towns of the Roman Empire, physicians were appointed by the municipality, whose business it was to wait on the poor as well as on the rich. Yet, when all this is justly considered, the fact remains, that charity was comparatively an unmeaning word until Christianity appeared. Largesses bestowed on the multitude by emperors and demagogues were from other motives than a desire to relieve distress. Considerations of policy had a large part in such benefactions as those of Nerva and Trajan for poor children and orphans. Nothing effectual was done to check the crime of infanticide, which had the sanction of philosophers of highest repute. The rescue of foundlings was often the infliction upon them, especially upon the females, of a lot worse than death. Gladiatorial fights — the pastime which spread over the Roman Empire in its flourishing days, and against which hardly a voice was ever raised — could not fail to harden the spectators, who learned to feast their eyes on the sight of human agony.

From the beginning, the outflow of charity was natural to Christians. God had so loved the world, that he *gave* His Son. Christ loved men, and *gave* himself for them. The Christian principle was love, and love was expressed in giving liberally to

those in need. The disciples at Jerusalem were so generous in their gifts to the poor of their number, that they are said to have "had all things in common"; although other passages in the Acts prove that there was no actual communism, and Christianity never impugned in the least the rights of property. Wherever a church was established, there were abundant offerings regularly made for the poor, systematic provisions for the care of the sick, of orphans, and of all other classes who required aid. Gifts were poured out, even for the help of Christians in distant places, without stint. In the second and third centuries there were scattered all over the Roman world these Christian societies, whose members were bound together as one family, each taking pleasure in relieving the wants of every other. Through their bishops and other officers, there was a systematic alms-giving on a scale for which no precedent had ever before existed. Nor was it indiscriminate, or in a way to encourage idleness, as it too often was, even when the motive was laudable, in the middle ages. There is an exhortation of the Apostle Paul, in which the spirit of the gospel, as it actually embodied itself in the early Church, is impressively indicated. "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."<sup>1</sup> There were reclaimed thieves in the church at Ephesus. The apostle urges them to industry in order that they may have the means of aiding those in want. Nothing could better set before us the influence of the new religion. The Apostolic Constitutions, which disclose the rules followed among the churches as early as the Nicene age, ordain that the poor man shall be assisted, not according to his expectations, but in proportion to his real needs, of which the bishops and deacons are to judge; and to be assisted in such a way as best to secure his temporal and spiritual good.<sup>2</sup> It is added, "God hates the lazy." The exercise of discrimination, and of care not to foster idleness, is a frequent theme of exhortation during several centuries. In one of the earliest post-apostolic writings, the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*,<sup>3</sup> the Christian disciple is cautioned to keep his money in his hands until

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians iv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Const. Apost.*, iv. 5, iii. 4, 12-14. See Chastel's *The Charity of the Primitive Churches*, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. i. 6 (see, also, i. 5).



he makes them "sweat." Asylums for orphans, hospitals for the sick, sprang into being under the auspices of the Church. In process of time *noscomia*, or hospitals for the diseased, including the insane, were founded in all the principal cities, and even in smaller towns, and in some country places. Nor did the vast stream of benefaction flow out for the help of Christians alone. When pests broke out, as at Alexandria in the third century, and somewhat earlier at Carthage, the Christians, under the lead of their clergy, instead of forsaking the victims of disease, or driving them from their houses, as the heathen did, showed their courage and compassion by personally ministering to them. The parable of the Good Samaritan had not been uttered in vain. Among the numerous recorded examples of charity to the heathen is the act of Atticus, Archbishop of Constantinople (A.D. 406-426), who, during a famine in Nicea, sent three hundred pieces of gold to the presbyter Calliopius. This almoner was directed to distribute it among the suffering who were ashamed to beg, without distinction of faith. Acacius, Bishop of Amida, about A.D. 420, persuaded his clergy to sell the gold and silver vessels of the church, that he might ransom several thousands of suffering Persian captives who had been taken by the Romans. On one occasion Chrysostom, passing through the streets of Antioch, on his way to the cathedral, saw a multitude of poor, distressed persons. He read to his audience the xvth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Then he described the blind, the crippled, and diseased through which he had just seen, and proceeded to exhort his hearers to exercise toward their "brothers" the compassion which they themselves had need of at the hands of God.<sup>1</sup> "Christian charity extended over all the surface of the empire, like a vast tissue of benevolence. There was no city, no hamlet, which, with its church and its priest, had not its treasure for the poor; no desert which had not its hospitable convent for travellers. The compassion of the Church was open to all."<sup>2</sup>

These meagre references to the charitable work of the early Church may call to mind the miracle that Christianity wrought in penetrating the human heart with a spirit of kindness, the like to which the world before had never known. That same spirit, not always discreetly it may be, has been operative among Christian nations ever since. It is ever detecting forms of human want and

<sup>1</sup> *Opp.*, vol. iii. pp. 248 *seq.* See Chastel, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Chastel, p. 304.



infirmity which have not been previously noticed, and devising for them relief. No superior prudence in administering charity, derived from social and economic science, could have ever called into being, nor can it ever dispense with, that temper of unselfish pity and love out of which the charities of Christian people, age after age, have continued to flow. In this feature of beneficence, the Christendom of to-day, contrasted with heathen society of any age, is like a garden full of fruits and flowers by the side of a desert.

Christianity is the only known corrective of the evils out of which socialism arises. The enrichment of the few, and the impoverishing of the many, can be remedied by no infraction of the right of property, which would bring back barbarism. The only antidote is to be found in that spirit of beneficence which prompted Zaccheus to give half of his goods to feed the poor. That spirit, when it prevails, will dictate such arrangements between capitalist and laborer as will secure to the latter a fair return for his toil. It will check the vast accumulation of wealth in a few individuals. And the Christian spirit, as in ancient days, will inspire patience and contentment, and a better than an earthly hope, in the minds of the class whose lot in life is hard.

In speaking of the improvement of society through the agency of Christianity, it is natural for us to think of the two great scourges of mankind, — war and slavery. Iniquitous wars are undertaken in modern days. Yet, if we compare the motives that lead to warfare now with those which in ancient times filled the world with incessant strife, we cannot but perceive, much as remains to be accomplished, a vast and salutary change. The laws and usages of war have felt the humanizing touch of the gospel. The manner in which non-combatants are treated is a signal illustration. Once they were at the mercy of the conqueror, who too often knew no mercy. Their lives were forfeited. Reduction to slavery was a mitigation of the penalty which it was lawful to inflict on them. A military commander who should treat his prisoners as commanders like Julius Cæsar, who were thought in their time to be humane, treated them, would be an object of universal execration. A like change has taken place, even as regards the property of a conquered belligerent. The extinction of a nationality like Poland, even when arguments in favor of it are not wholly destitute of weight, is a dark blot on the reputation of the sovereigns or nations by whom it is effected. Formerly it would be the expected and

approved result of a successful war. In the provisions now made for the care and cure of the wounded, for the health and comfort of the common soldier, including the voluntary labors of devoted physicians and nurses, we perceive a product of Christian feeling. The Romans had their soldiers' hospitals (*valetudinaria*) ; but the vast and varied work of philanthropy in this direction, which belongs to our time, was something of which no man dreamed.

Ancient slavery was generally the servitude of men of the same race as the master. It involved the forfeiture of almost all rights on the part of the slave. It was attended with a kind and degree of cruelty which the intelligence of the victims, and the danger of revolt resulting from it, seemed to require, if the system was to be kept up. In extensive regions it had the effect, finally, almost to abolish free labor, to bring landed property into the hands of a few proprietors, to enervate the Roman spirit, and thus to pave the way for the downfall of the empire through the energy of uncivilized but more vigorous races. Christianity found slavery everywhere. It preached no revolution ; it brought forward no abstract political or social theory ; but it undermined slavery by the expulsive force of the new principle of impartial justice, and self-denying love, and fraternal equality, which it inculcated. From the beginning it counselled patience and quiet endurance ; but it demanded fairness and kindness of the master, brought master and slave together at the common table of the Lord, and encouraged emancipation. The law of Constantine (A.D. 321), which forbade all civil acts on Sunday, except the emancipation of slaves, was in keeping with all his legislation on the subject of slavery. It is a true index of the state of feeling which is manifest in the discourses of the eminent teachers of the Church of that period. Ancient slavery, and, afterward, serfdom in the mediæval age, disappeared under the steady influence of Christian sentiment. The revival of slavery in modern times has been followed by a like result under the same agency. A century ago the slave-trade on the coast of Africa was approved by Protestant Christians. At first, after his conversion, John Newton, the pastor of Cowper, did not condemn it. But at length the perception dawned on his mind, and became a deep conviction, that the capture and enslavement of human beings is unchristian. The same conviction entered other minds. It grew and spread, until, in the treaties of

leading nations, the slave-trade has been declared to be piracy. This amazing change was not wrought by a new revelation. It was the effect of the steady shining of the light of Christian truth long ago recorded in the Scriptures.

If it were practicable to dwell upon the varied consequences of the religion of Christ as they are seen in the actual state of Christian civilization, we should have to trace out the modifications of political science under the benign influence of the gospel, the transforming effect of Christian ethics in such departments as prison discipline and penal law, the new spirit that breathes in modern literature, which emanates from Christian ideas of human nature, of forgiveness, and of things supernatural — a spirit which is vividly felt when one passes from the dramas of Æschylus to the dramas of Shakespeare — the way in which the arts of music, painting, and sculpture have developed new types of beauty and harmony from contact with the Christian faith, the indirect power of Christianity in promoting discoveries and inventions that conduce to health and material comfort, the softening influence of Christianity upon manners and social intercourse, and even movements to protect animals from cruel treatment. But the topic is too broad to be pursued farther.

To appreciate the magnitude of the results of Christianity, one must bear in mind that they do not consist alone or chiefly in external changes. There is a transformation of thought and feeling. The very texture of the spirits of men is not what it was. The conscience and the imagination, the standards of judgment, the ideals of character, the ends and aims of human endeavor, have undergone a revolution. When a continent, with its huge mountains and broad plains, is gradually lifted up out of the sea, there is no doubt that a mighty force is silently active in producing so amazing an effect. What is any physical change in comparison with that moral and spiritual transformation, not inaptly called “a new creation,” which Christianity has already caused?

Now, the total effect of Christianity which Christendom — past and present, and future as far as we can foresee the future — presents, is due to the personal agency of Jesus of Nazareth. It can even be shown to be largely due to a personal love to him which animated the Christians of the first centuries, and which still pervades a multitude of disciples who call themselves by his name. Had this bond of personal gratitude and trust been absent, this

vast result could never have come to pass. The power of Christianity in moulding Christendom is undeniably owing to the religious and supernatural elements which are involved in the life, character, and work of Jesus Christ. Had he been conceived of as merely a human reformer, a teacher of an excellent system of morals, a martyr, the effect would never have followed. Subtract the faith in him as the Sent of God, as the Saviour from sin and death, as the hope of the soul, and you lose the forces without which the religion of Jesus could never have supplanted the ancient heathenism, regenerated the Teutonic nations, and begotten the Christian civilization in the midst of which we live, and which is spreading over the globe. Men may raise a question about this or that miracle recorded in the gospels. The miracle of Christendom, wrought by Christ, is a fact which none can question.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EVIDENCE OF THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY FROM ITS ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND FROM THE COMPARISON OF IT WITH THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY

CHRISTIANITY stands in an organic relation to the ancient religion of the Hebrews. The very name "Christ" is an Old Testament title. It is equally true, however, that Christianity is a signal advance upon the Old Testament religion. The Hebrew Scriptures themselves point forward to an era when the system of which they are the records is to resolve itself into something almost inconceivably higher. That Christianity is on that higher plane foreshadowed of old, the New Testament distinctly and emphatically declares, and it is quite evident. It did not confine itself to the reform of a system which had fallen into degeneracy. Far from it. Rather does it present itself in the teaching of Jesus, and elsewhere in the New Testament, as the absolute religion. It carries out to perfection whatever revelations had preceded. In this way alone could the ideal of the kingdom of God, before imperfectly conceived and dimly sketched, be realized. Through Christ the relation of God to the world is fully disclosed. In the long crusade against heathenism, along with the unity and personality of God, his transcendence was set forth in bold relief. It was left to the religion of the New Testament to emphasize its counterpart, his immanence. He is in the world, although not to be identified with it. Through Christ the kingdom of God actually attains its universal character. Religion is not coincident, as in all the ancient communities, with the limits of a single community. It is not restricted as was the cult of the Hebrew faith. The heavenly good of the gospel is of such a nature that it can be, and must be, offered indiscriminately to all men. The sense of a common relationship to Christ and to God melts away all differences. Appealing to a common religious sentiment, a common consciousness of sin and of the need of help, and offering a remedy that is equally adapted to all mankind, Christianity shows



itself possessed of the qualities of a universal religion. Christianity vindicates for itself this character, as being a religion of principles, not of rules. Where the aim of the teaching of Jesus is accomplished, the soul becomes a law to itself. The end which the soul sets before it is itself a criterion of what is to be done and what omitted. The purpose in view is to infuse a new life. The work of the gospel, as it is depicted both by Jesus and by the Apostles, is to effect a new creation in humanity—to render his disciples new creatures in the fellowship with him. It thereby establishes a filial connection between man and God. In its inculcation of seminal principles, not seeking to dictate or restrain conduct farther than these may prompt, it shows itself the ultimate type of religion. As to things external, those who insist on a leaden uniformity, unmodifiable forms of polity and ritual, misconceive the teaching of Jesus and the catholic quality which permeates it.

The injunctions of the gospel are not a closed aggregate of precepts, cut and dried. They are truths containing seeds of development, so that the compass of perceived obligations, the ramifications of Christian duty, are perpetually spreading. The sphere of moral culture and of Christian beneficence, in its basis ever the same, is continually opening out in new directions.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is never outgrown and never obsolete.

The ethical teaching of Jesus, confining moral good and evil to cherished feelings and inward purposes, attaches approval and condemnation, not to expressions in word and conduct in themselves, but, in the case of evil, to the hidden germs within the soul, the impure desire, the vindictive wish, the unjust or uncharitable judgment, permitted in the heart. This is the exalted ideal of the gospel.

In the teaching of Jesus, ethics and religion are inseparable. The essential nature of both is reducible to a single principle. In this particular His teaching is of transcendent worth. The duty is love to God in no confined measure,—love to the infinite Being, but like unto this law, that is, of a piece with it, and is impartial love to one's neighbor,—love to man. The sum of all obligations is the one principle of love to the universal society of which God is the head, and of which every man, being made in the image of God, yet finite in his nature, is a member and, in essential worth, the peer of every other. No simplification could be more

<sup>1</sup> As illustrated admirably in *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, by F. G. Peabody.

complete or exhaustive. It extends over the whole field of human obligation, and goes down to the root of character.

Christian ethics is sometimes charged with serious defects. J. S. Mill observes, "I believe that other ethics than that which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind."<sup>1</sup> He guards against misunderstanding by adding, "I believe that the sayings of Christ are all that I can see any evidence of their having been intended to be ; that they are irreconcilable with nothing which a comprehensive morality requires ; that everything which is excellent in ethics may be brought within them, with no greater violence to their language than has been done by all who have attempted to deduce from them any practical system of conduct whatever."<sup>2</sup> If nothing more were meant than that the New Testament does not pretend to define all the particulars of duty, but leaves them in some cases to be inferred, Mill's observation would be just. He refers, in support of his criticism, to the absence of any recognition, in Christian ethics, of duty to the State, to the negative character of Christian precepts, to an exclusive emphasis laid upon the passive virtues, and to the want of reference to magnanimity, personal dignity, the sense of honor, and the like — qualities which, he says, we learn to esteem from Greek and Roman sources.

The imputation that Christian precepts are preëminently negative, is surely not well founded. It is not "a fugitive and cloistered virtue" which is enjoined in the New Testament. To do good is made not less obligatory than to shun evil.<sup>3</sup> The religion which has for its work to transform the world is not satisfied with a mere abstinence from wrong-doing.

It is not true that by insisting on mutual benevolence, Christianity thereby weakens the force of particular obligations. The gospel does not frown upon patriotism any more than upon the domestic affections. Not the love of country, more than the love of kindred, is chilled by Christian teaching. The State, as well as the family, is recognized as a part of the divine order. Jesus was moved to tears by the doom of Jerusalem. It was an Apostle who loved his own people so ardently that he was willing to be accursed for their sake.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On Liberty*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> See *e.g.* Matt. v. 16, xxv. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Romans ix. 3.

If the passive virtues are prominent in the Christian system, it is not as the substitute, but as the complement, of qualities of another class. Revenge is unlawful ; truth is not to be propagated by violence ; but unrighteousness in every form is assailed with an earnestness that admits of no increase. The non-resistance enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount is not a prohibition to inflict suffering upon wrong-doers, but to do this with retaliation as a motive, and not discerning the efficacy of the practice enjoined in the precept "overcome evil with good." Nor does the religion of the New Testament discountenance the use of force for the protection of society. The magistrate is the minister of God for the execution of justice. As for magnanimity, the sense of honor, and kindred feelings, they are included in the category of whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report.<sup>1</sup> Christianity excludes nothing that is admirable from its ideal of character ; and if there be virtues which have flourished on heathen ground, Christianity takes them up, while at the same time it infuses into them a new spirit — the leaven of self-renunciation.

Robust and aggressive elements enter into the Christian ideal of character ; yet there was a reason why, at the outset, stress should be laid upon meekness, patience, resignation, and the other virtues called passive. The foes of a Christian were of his own household. All the forces of society, civil and ecclesiastical, were combined against him. There was the strongest possible need for the exercise of just these qualities. Particular affections, like the love of home and of country, have a root in Christian ethics. But since Christianity came into a world where patriotism, and other affections limited in their range, exercised a control that supplanted the broader principle of philanthropy, it was requisite that the wider and more generic principles should be inculcated with all urgency, not with a view to extirpate or enervate, but to keep within bounds and to purify subordinate principles of action. In Christian ethics, all the virtues, the milder and the more negative, with the bolder and the more heroic — courage in suffering and courage in action, the self-sacrifice of the mother in her household, of the patriot on the battle-field, of the missionary to distant nations — find a just recognition.

In these inquiries it is important not to overlook the distinctive

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv. 8. See also 1 Cor. xiii., a chapter which evidently reflects the spirit of the ethical teaching of Jesus.

character of Christianity. It is a religion. It is not primarily or chiefly a code of moral precepts. Morality finds a broader statement and a more impressive sanction, and, above all, it gains a new motive. But the morals of the gospel are not the first nor the main thing. Gibbon plumes himself on finding in Isocrates a precept which he pronounces the equivalent of the Golden Rule. He might have collected like sayings from a variety of heathen sources ; although neither Confucius nor any other of the authors in whom these sayings are found contains the Christian precept in a form at once positive and not merely prohibitive, and in a form universal, and not merely in reference to certain particular relations in life — as to that of father and son. But an ethical precept, not very remote in its tenor, may undoubtedly be cited from a number of ethnic teachers, and also from ancient Rabbis. Nowhere, to be sure, has it the preëminence assigned to it in the legislation of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> But the originality of the gospel does not consist in particular directions pertaining to the conduct of life, however pure and noble they may be. On special points of duty it is true that Christianity speaks with an impressiveness never equalled elsewhere. But while an awe-inspiring tone is heard in its moral injunctions, not everything in them is absolutely novel. Christianity is, in its essence, a religion. Nor is the substance of Christianity to be found either in its doctrine of the immortality of the soul, nor in various other propositions which it is usual to classify under the head of religious beliefs.

Christianity has been truly styled the religion of redemption. Here lies its defining characteristic. It is the approach of heaven to men, the mercy of God coming down to lift them up to a higher fellowship. The originality of Christianity is to be sought in the character and person of Christ and in the new life that goes forth from him, to be appropriated by the race of mankind.

Probably no achievement of the human mind in the same field of thought outranks the Greek philosophy. In modern ages the literature on like themes is composed not without the potent aid of the Christian Scriptures, and the light which has spread

<sup>1</sup> In the gospel, however, it does not supersede the need of the Christian exposition of that which the individual may rightfully claim or desire for *himself*. It is given to rid the disciple of the misleading effect of a selfish bias, in other words, to brace him up on the weak side.

from this source. As indicating the native power of the human intellect to ascertain the truth in the sphere of ethics and religion, there is nothing which rises to the level of that development of philosophical thought which Bacon styles "the pagan divinity." Hence a comparison of it with the teachings of Christ and His disciples ought to aid us in solving the question whether there is a likelihood that Christianity owes its being to man alone, or, as, according to the Evangelist, the question is stated by Christ Himself, — whether the teaching be of God, or whether He speaks of Himself.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek Philosophy was a preparation for Christianity in a threefold way. It dissipated, or tended to dissipate, the superstitions of polytheism ; it awakened a sense of need which philosophy of itself failed to meet ; and it so educated the intellect and conscience as to render the gospel apprehensible, and, in many cases, congenial to the mind. It did more than remove obstacles out of the way. Its work was positive as well as negative. It originated ideas and habits of thought which had more or less direct affinity with the religion of the gospel, and which found in this religion their proper counterpart. The prophetic element of the Greek philosophy lay in the glimpses of truth which it could not fully discern, and in the obscure and unconscious pursuit of a good which it could not definitely grasp.

Socrates stands at the beginning of this movement. The preceding philosophy had been predominantly physical. It sought for an explanation of nature. The mystic, Pythagoras, blended with his natural philosophy moral and religious doctrine ; but that doctrine, whatever it was, appears to have rested on no scientific basis. Socrates is the founder of moral science ; and the whole subsequent course of Greek philosophy is traceable to the impulse which emanated from this remarkable man. He was aptly styled by the Florentine Platonist of the Renaissance, Marsilius Ficinus, the John the Baptist for the ancient world.

1. The soul and its moral improvement was the great subject that employed his attention. All his inquiries and reflections, writes Xenophon, turned upon what was pious, what impious ; what honorable, what base ; what just, what unjust ; what wisdom, what folly ; what courage, what cowardice ; what a state or political community, and the like. This searching method of laying bare weak-

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 17.



ness and folly finally had the effect, as Xenophon records, that many "who were once his followers, had forsaken him." Who can fail to be reminded of the *μετάνοια* — the self-judgment and reform — which were required at the very first preaching of the gospel?

2. Socrates asserted the doctrine of theism, and taught and exemplified the spiritual nature of religion. It is true that he believed in "gods many and lords many." But he believed in one supreme, personal being, to whom the deepest reverence was to be paid. He taught the truth of a universal Providence. "He was persuaded," says the same disciple, "that the gods watch over the actions and affairs of men in a way altogether different from what the vulgar imagined; for while these limited their knowledge to some particulars only, Socrates, on the contrary, extended it to all; firmly persuaded that every word, every action, nay, even our most retired deliberations, are open to their view; that they are everywhere present, and communicate to mankind all such knowledge as relates to the conduct of human life."<sup>1</sup> He had only one prayer, that the gods would give him those things that were good, of which they alone were the competent judges. No service is so acceptable to the Deity as that of "a pure and pious soul."<sup>2</sup> He counselled absolute obedience to the Deity, and acted on this principle. He chose his career in compliance with an inward call from God, which he did not feel at liberty to disregard. At his trial, in his *Apology*, he said, "Be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth — that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death."<sup>3</sup>

3. Socrates had a belief, not a confident belief, in the future life and in the immortality of the soul. The last word in his final address is: "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways — I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows."<sup>4</sup> His last words to his friends, if we may trust the *Phædo*, were significant of a hope.<sup>5</sup>

4. In the ethical doctrine of Socrates, virtue is identified with

<sup>1</sup> καὶ γὰρ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι θεοὺς ἐνόμιζεν ἀνθρώπων, οὐχ ὃν τρόπον οἱ πολλοὶ νομίζουσιν, οὔτοι μὲν γὰρ οἴονται τοὺς θεοὺς τὰ μὲν εἰδέναι, τὰ δ' οὐκ εἰδέναι. Σωκράτης δὲ πάντα μὲν ἡγεῖτο θεοὺς εἰδέναι, τὰ τε λεγόμενα καὶ πραττόμενα καὶ τὰ σιγῇ βουλευόμενα, πανταχοῦ δὲ παρῆναι, καὶ σημαίνειν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπείων πάντων. — *Mem.*, I. i. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, I. iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Apology*, 41 C. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 A.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

knowledge, with the discernment of the highest good. This is evident from the reports of Xenophon, as well as from Plato. The perception of virtue could not fail to be attended with the practice of it. None who saw the highest good, would fail to choose it.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of Socrates, which Aristotle also attributes to him, would, if logically carried out, resolve virtue into an intellectual state, and subvert the ground of moral accountableness for evil doing. Thus, unwittingly, he paved the way for that intellectualism which made the highest spiritual attainments accessible only to the gifted few—a spirit which pervaded the schools of Greek philosophy afterward. His *aim* was a worthy one,—to impart to ethics a scientific character.

5. He was personally far from disposed to exaggerate the intellectual powers of man, or to overlook the limits of human reason. On the contrary, he was characterized by a genuine humility.

In passing to Plato, we do not leave Socrates; but it is not possible to draw the line, in the Platonic Dialogues, between the teaching of the master and the ideas and opinions of the more speculative disciple. The elevated tone of the Platonic system, and its many points of congeniality with Christian truth, have been recognized in the Church in ancient and in modern times. Men like Origen and Augustine, among the Fathers, were imbued with the Platonic spirit. Not a few, as far back as Justin Martyr and as late as Neander, have found in the lofty teaching of Plato a bridge over which they have passed into the kingdom of Christ. Turn where we will in these immortal productions, we are in the bracing atmosphere of a spiritual philosophy. We touch on some of the most important points which invite comparison with Christian doctrine.

1. Plato's conception of God approaches but fails to attain to that of Christianity. He teaches that God is a Person, a self-conscious intelligence. No other interpretation of his doctrine is so reconcilable with his various utterances on the subject.<sup>2</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, III. ix. 4. For further illustrative passages, see Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philosophy*, i. 85.

<sup>2</sup> By some his idea of the good is identified absolutely with God: but see Butler's *Lectures on Ancient Phil.*, ii. 62, but also Thompson's note. See also Ritter, *Hist. of Ancient Phil.*, ii. 284. For other views of the passage in the *Republic*, vi. 508, see Zeller, *Gesch. d. Griech. Phil.*, ii. 208, 309, 310.

tenth book of *The Laws* he speaks of the "lost and perverted natures" who have adopted atheism. But Plato did not escape from the dualism which clung to Greek as well as to Oriental thinking. Matter is eternal, and is an independent and a partially intractable material. God fashions, He does not create, the world. Then, side by side with the Supreme Being, is the realm of ideas, the patterns and archetypes of whatever comes to be, and which, it is clear not only from Plato himself, but also from the polemical attitude of Aristotle, are conceived of as substantial entities. By thus assigning to the ideas a kind of separate existence, Plato gave room and occasion for the pantheistic turn which his system assumed in the hands of professed Platonists of a later day.

2. He followed Socrates in his implicit faith in divine Providence, so far even as the care of the individual is concerned.<sup>1</sup> But we miss in him, as in the ancient philosophers generally, any conception of the final cause of history, of a goal to which the course of history tends, such as we have in the Christian idea of the kingdom of God on earth; and hence there is wanting a broad and satisfying conception of the Providence of God as related to mankind. Hellenic pride, the Greek feeling of superiority to the barbarian, was one thing which stood in the way of an ampler idea of the plan of God respecting the human race. Plato was not emancipated from this feeling.<sup>2</sup> But as to the moral government of God, under which the good are rewarded and the evil chastised and punished, both in this world and in the world to come — this is a conviction with which his mind is profoundly impressed.<sup>3</sup>

3. Plato teaches the super-terrestrial properties and destiny of the soul. Man is possessed of a principle of intelligence — *voûs* — and is thus in the image of God. In a beautiful passage of the *Phædo*, the notion is confuted that the soul is a mere harmony of parts or elements, subject to the affections of the body. Rather is it a nature which leads and masters them — "herself a diviner thing than any harmony."<sup>4</sup> The soul is immortal. The inward life is "the true self and concernment of a man."<sup>5</sup> "Let each one of us," says Plato, "leave every other kind of knowledge, and seek

<sup>1</sup> *Phæd.*, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Plato's objection to the distinction of Hellenes and Barbarians, in the *Politicus* (262), is on a logical ground; just as, in the context, he objects to the distinction of men and animals.

<sup>3</sup> See *Rep.*, x. 614.

<sup>4</sup> *Phæd.*, 94.

<sup>5</sup> *Rep.*, iv. 443.

and follow one thing only, if peradventure he may be able to learn and find also who there is that can and will teach him to distinguish the life of good and evil, and to choose always and everywhere the better life as far as possible.”<sup>1</sup> There are two patterns before men, the one blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched. It is utter folly and infatuation to grow like the last. We are to cling to righteousness at whatever sacrifice. “No man,” says Plato, “but an utter fool and coward is afraid of death itself, but he is afraid of doing wrong. For, to go to the world below, having a soul which is like a vessel full of injustice, is the last and worst of all evils.”<sup>2</sup> He goes so far, in a remarkable passage in the *Gorgias*, as to say that a righteous man, if he has done wrong, will prefer to be punished rather than deprive justice of her due. “The next best thing to a man being just, is that he should become just, and be chastised and punished.”<sup>3</sup> His faith in immortality moved him to insist earnestly on the duty of caring for the spiritual part of our being.<sup>4</sup> We are to cling to righteousness at whatever sacrifice.

4. Plato insists, moreover, on the need of redemption. But his idea of the nature of redemption is faulty from the defect that characterizes his notion of sin. Redemption is not strictly moral, the emancipation of the will from the control of evil, although this element is not ignored; but it is the purification of the soul from the pollution supposed to be inevitable from its connection with matter. The spirit is to be washed from the effect of its abode in the body, its contact with a foreign, antagonistic element that defiles it. And what is the method of redemption? Sin being conceived of as ignorance, as an infatuation of the understanding, deliverance is through instruction, through science. Hence the study of arithmetic and geometry is among the remedies prescribed for the disorder of human nature. The intellect is to be corrected in its action. The reliance is predominantly upon teaching. Thus, Plato, through his dualism on the one hand, and the exaggerated part which he gives to the understanding in connection with moral action, on the other, fails to apprehend exactly both the nature of sin and of salvation.

5. There is a Christian idea at the bottom of Plato's ethical system. Virtue he defines as resemblance to God according to

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.*, x. 618.

<sup>2</sup> *Gorgias*, 522 E.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 527 B.

<sup>4</sup> *Phæd.*, 107.

the measure of our ability.<sup>1</sup> To be like God, Christianity declares to be the perfection of human character. But there was wanting to the heathen mind, even in its highest flight, that true and full perception of the divine excellence which is requisite for the adequate realization of this ethical maxim. We cannot but wonder at hearing Plato say, almost by inspiration, "In God is no unrighteousness at all — He is altogether righteous; and there is nothing more like Him than he of us who is most righteous." "To become like Him is to become holy, just, and wise."<sup>2</sup> Yet, with Plato, justice is the crowning virtue, the highest attribute of character. It is justice which keeps all the powers of the soul in harmony, and connected with this regnant virtue are wisdom, courage, and temperance, corresponding respectively to the several functions, reason, the will with the higher impulses of the spirit, and the appetitive nature. Plato has only an occasional glimpse of the higher principle of love, which Christianity makes the sum and source of moral excellence. It does not enter as an essential link in his system.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the possession of virtue in the highest sense is possible only to the philosopher. And Plato says that the philosophic nature is a plant that rarely grows among men.<sup>4</sup> In the ideal commonwealth, it is only the few who are endowed with philosophic reason. It is their prerogative to rule the many; and it is only the few who are capable of realizing the moral ideal in its perfection. How opposed is this to the gospel, which offers the heavenly good to all! The idea of an intellectual aristocracy, with respect to which Plato stands on the common level of ancient thought, is made somewhat less repulsive by the duty which is laid upon the philosopher of descending "into the den,"<sup>5</sup> and working among men, laboring "to make their ways as far as possible agreeable to the ways of God."<sup>6</sup>

Plato's *Republic* offers the finest illustration of the loftiness of his aspirations, and, at the same time, of the barriers which it was impossible for him to surmount. This work gives evidence of the yearning of his mind for a more intimate union and fellowship of men than had hitherto existed. How could this aspiration be

<sup>1</sup> *Theat.*, 176 A.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The *Symposium*, which, though difficult of analysis, contains passages of great beauty, shows how far he went in this direction.

<sup>4</sup> *Republic*, B. vi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vii. 519.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 501.



realized? The only form of society in which he could conceive it possible for such a community to come into being, was the State. And, in order to give effect to his conception, individuality must be lost in the all-controlling influence and sway of the social whole. Plato says that in the best ordered state there will be a common feeling, such as pervades the parts of the human body. He uses the very figure of St. Paul when he says of Christians that they are members one of another. But this relation could never be produced by any form of political society. Besides this insurmountable difficulty, Plato does not escape from the pride of race. It is an Hellenic state, which he will found, and the Hellenes are not to treat the barbarians as they treat one another, the Hellenic race being "alien and strange to the barbarians."<sup>1</sup> The vision of the republic must, therefore, stand as an unconscious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. The ancient heathen world could not supply the conditions demanded for its fulfilment.

Aristotle, when compared with Plato, his great teacher and friend, presents fewer points of similarity to Christian teaching, for the reason that his mind is less religious, and that he confines himself more closely to this mundane sphere, and to the phenomena that fall directly under human observation.

1. Aristotle was a Theist. He undertakes a scientific proof of the existence of a supreme intelligent Being.<sup>2</sup> His conception, though lofty, is defective from a Christian point of view, since God is brought into no constant, living relation to the world, as its Creator and Ruler, and, especially, no place is found for His moral government.

2. Aristotle holds, likewise, to an immaterial, intelligent principle in man; but he leaves it doubtful whether this element of the soul is invested with individuality, and thus whether our personal life continues after death. Ethics, according to Aristotle, relates to human conduct, and does not concern itself with the end or rule of action which the gods adopt for themselves. He sets forth no general principle like that of Plato, that we are to imitate God as far as possible. And as the highest bond of unity is political, ethics is treated as a subordinate branch of politics. He discerns and opposes the error of Socrates in confounding virtue with

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.*, v. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphys.*, B. xii., where the whole doctrine of God is systematically unfolded.

knowledge. He assigns to the voluntary faculty its proper place. If sin were merely ignorance, there would be no ground for blame or punishment. As far as men are the authors of their character, they are responsible for the attraction which, in consequence of that character, evil assumes. Aristotle is acquainted with no transforming principle which may dictate conduct the reverse of what has existed hitherto; although, as Neander has pointed out, the doctrine of Aristotle as to the effect of moral action holds good when applied to the fortifying of a principle already implanted. One must be good in order to do good; but it is a case where the fountain is deepened by the outflow of its waters.

3. In the Fourth Book of the Nicomachean ethics, Aristotle describes the man of magnanimity, or noble pride. This portraiture of the ideal man contains many features which, from a Christian point of view, merit approval. Yet the philosopher's ideal man, while he may be eager to do favors, will disdain to receive them. The character which is depicted by Aristotle in this remarkable passage is grand in its outlines, but it lacks the essential element, the very leaven, of Christian goodness, the spirit of humility and love.

4. It is evident that Aristotle does not rise above the intellectualism which excludes the mass of mankind, on account of an alleged natural incapacity, from access to the highest good. In his treatise on politics he makes slavery to be of two kinds, one of which springs from violence and the law of war, and the other from the inferior mental powers of the enslaved.<sup>1</sup> This last species of servitude he defends, on the ground that the enslaved are not fitted by nature for any higher lot. As reason in the individual is to the lower faculties, and as the soul is to the body, so is the enlightened class in society to those beneath them, who are animated implements to be managed by their owners.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament the estimate of the spiritual worth of the slave is *toto cælo* different.

5. At the close of his principal ethical treatise, Aristotle dilates with genuine eloquence on the lofty delight which belongs to intellectual contemplation, wherein man calls into exercise that part of his being in which he resembles the gods, and in this act must,

<sup>1</sup> B. i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> With reference to occasional protests in Antiquity, against slavery, see J. Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, *Politique d'Aristote*, I. ii. § 3 n.

therefore, be most pleasing to them. This is to live conformably to that which is highest in us, which is, to be sure, in bulk small, but in dignity and power is incomparably superior to all things besides. So doing, we, though mortal, put on, as far as may be, immortality. What Aristotle here describes, with so much depth of feeling, as the highest state of man, was necessarily conceived of, however, as the privilege of only a select few, while Christianity opens the door of access to the highest spiritual good, to all mankind. Nor does Aristotle connect this elevated form of activity, as it exists either in God or men, with a principle of beneficence which is a fountain of blessing, not to the subject alone, but to universal society. On the question whether personal consciousness survives death, the great question of the immortality of the soul, the writings of this philosopher contain no clear and definite expression of opinion.

From the time of Aristotle, the speculative tendency declined, and philosophy assumed a practical cast.<sup>1</sup> Its themes were virtue and happiness; its problems related to human life on earth. The later schools, for the most part, borrowed their metaphysics from their predecessors. Religious questions, such as the relation of Divine Providence to human agency, and to the existence of evil, became prominent. The individual was thrown back upon himself, and became an object of consideration, not as a member of the state, but as a man, a member of the human race. The causes of this great philosophical change were various. The fall of the Greek political communities, the conquests of Alexander, the fusion of numerous peoples in the Roman Empire, were prominent sources of this intellectual revolution. The old political organizations, in which the life of the individual centred, were broken up. He was driven, almost, to look upon himself in a broader relation, as a citizen of the world. Moreover, the impulse which Socrates gave to ethical inquiry, although it was combined in him with a speculative element, and still more in Plato and Aristotle, continued to be potent, and became prevailing. The Stoic and Epicurean systems, antagonistic to each other as they appear to be, and as, in their particular features, they really are, manifest the same subjective character. Tranquillity and serenity of the inner life is the end and aim of both. Scepticism

<sup>1</sup> See, on this change, Zeller, *Die Philosophie d. Griechen*, vol. iii. 1 seq.

followed upon the rivalry of conflicting systems. Finally, the new Platonism appeared, a form of mysticism affording refuge to the believing but perplexed inquirer.

Systems which, on account of their influence, we have occasion here to consider, are the Epicurean and the Stoic.

The theology of Epicurus was a scheme of practical atheism. The adherents of this school did not deny the existence of the gods, but they denied to them any interest, or concern, in the affairs of the world. The current ideas of this philosophy are embodied, with wonderful skill and beauty, in the poem of Lucretius, which has for its subject the nature of things. To account for the origin of the world, he adopts the atomic theory of Democritus.

The heavens and the earth, as they had a beginning, approach the epoch of decay and dissolution. The soul is material and mortal; hence the dread of anything hereafter is needless and vain. All fear of the gods, with which men torment themselves, is irrational, since the gods stand aloof from men, and are absorbed in their own enjoyments. The end and aim of existence, according to the Epicurean school, is pleasure.

All good is resolved into pleasure. All special desires are to be subordinate to the general desire of happiness; and in this notion of happiness, the approbation of conscience is not included. Virtue, therefore, is a self-regarding prudence. It is the control of a far-sighted expediency by which unruly instincts are restrained from the excess which occasions pain. The founders of this school led virtuous lives, but the doctrine contained no motives of sufficient power to curb the passions of men generally, and, in the progress of time, showed its real tendencies.

Stoicism existed in two forms; first, the original system of Zeno and Chrysippus, and, secondly, the modified Roman Stoicism of the first and second centuries of the Christian era. If we looked at the metaphysics of Stoicism, we should infer that this philosophy contained little or nothing in harmony with Christianity. It was a revival of the early materialistic Pantheism. Nothing exists but matter. The soul itself is a corporeal entity. The universe is one, and is governed by one all-ruling law. Matter and the Deity are identical — the same principle in different aspects. The Deity, that is to say, is the immanent, creative force in matter, which acts ever according to law. This principle, developed in the totality of things, is Zeus. It is Providence, or Destiny. The uni-



versal force works blindly, but after the analogy of a rational agency. The world, proceeding by evolution from the primitive fire, eventually returns to its source through a universal conflagration, and the same process is to be renewed in an endless series of cycles. Fate rules all. The world is an organic unity; considered as a whole, it is perfect. Evil, when looked at in relation to the entire system, is good. The denial of free agency, and of immortality, was a corollary. As to the personality of the minor gods, the old Stoics were vacillating. Now they are spoken of as functions of nature, and now as persons. But if personal, they share the fate of men; they disappear in the final conflagration.

It seems strange that any system of morals worthy of the name could coexist with these ideas. The truth is, however, that the Stoics did not derive their ethics from their physical and metaphysical theories, and did not adjust these to their ethical doctrine. The essential thing is to live according to nature. This is the great maxim of the Stoic ethics.<sup>1</sup> By "nature" is meant the universal system in which the individual is one link. Sometimes, however, the constitution of the individual is denoted; and sometimes the term is used in a more restricted way still, to denote the rational faculty by itself. But to live according to nature is the one supreme, comprehensive duty. Virtue springs from rational self-determination, where reason alone guides the will, and the influence of the affections and emotions is smothered. These are contrary to reason; they interfere with the freedom of the soul. No anger, no pity, no lenity, no indulgence — this was the pure creed of Stoicism. Apathy is the right condition of the soul, which should be moved only by reason. Knowledge is necessary to virtue, since right doing without rational insight does not fill out the conception of virtue. Hence the virtuous man is the sage, the wise man; every other is a fool. Virtue, too, if it exist at all, must exist as a whole. It is a single principle; and so, too, the vices are united. Hence the world is divided into two classes, — the virtuous or wise, and the wicked or foolish.

This true ideal of primitive Stoicism was softened by the doctrine of preferables. Virtue is the sole thing which is good in itself.

<sup>1</sup> Witness the teaching of Cleanthes, ap. Stob., *Ecl.*, ii. 132 (Ritter and Preller, p. 380, where are the parallel statements of Chrysippus). Their view is expounded by Zeller, *Die Philosophie d. Griechen*, vol. iii. § 35: in Reichel's Engl. transl., p. 215.



But certain external things are auxiliary to virtue, and these may be called good, in a secondary sense; and so external things, which are unfavorable to virtue, may be termed evil. There is, also, a third class of neutral things, not being either advantageous or hurtful in this relation. Thus the Stoics discussed the question whether fame is a preferable, and on this point were divided in opinion.

Stoicism was cosmopolitan. It brought in the idea of a citizenship of the world. There is one community, one state, one set of laws. To this one state, all particular states are related, as are the houses in a city to one another. The sage labors that all may recognize themselves as one flock, and dwell together under the common rule of reason. Under the influence of this sentiment, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus utter counsels which resemble the New Testament injunctions of brotherly patience and lenity.<sup>1</sup> One must give himself up with perfect resignation to the course of the world. There is a rationality and wisdom in it; hence the duty of perfect, uncomplaining submission to things as they occur. "You must accuse neither God nor man," says Epictetus.<sup>2</sup> "That," says M. Aurelius, "is for the good of each thing, which the universal nature brings to each."<sup>3</sup>

The Roman Stoicism departed in certain particulars from the rigorous doctrines of the founders of the sect. There is a recognition, though not definite and uniform, of the personality of God, of the reality of the soul as distinct from the body, and of the continuance of personal life after death. Especially in Seneca, the Stoic philosophy assumes a very mitigated aspect. Self-sufficiency gives way to a sense of weakness and imperfection, which in terms is allied to Christian feeling. There is a paragraph in his treatise on Clemency, in which he describes the sinfulness of mankind in language which reminds one of the Apostle Paul.<sup>4</sup> Like Plato, he ascribes the creation to the goodness of God. Men are the children of God.<sup>5</sup> The sufferings of good men are the fatherly chastisement inflicted by Him. It is good for men to be afflicted; those who have not experienced adversity are objects of pity. "Pray and live," he says, "as if the eye of God were upon you."<sup>6</sup> "Live every day as if it were the last."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, vi. 44; Epictetus, *Discourses*, III. xxii. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourses*, iii. xxii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> *De Prov.*, I. Cf. *De Benef.*, ii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Med.*, x. 20, cf. x. 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ep.*, x.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Marc.*, xxiv.; see, also, vi.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

The obligation to cherish just and human feelings is frequently asserted by Seneca. "Wherever a *man* is," he says, "there is room for doing good."<sup>1</sup> He condemns gladiatorial shows.<sup>2</sup> He declares that "slaves are our fellow-servants," and are to be kindly treated.<sup>3</sup>

The coincidences between the moral teaching of Seneca and that of the New Testament are numerous and striking.<sup>4</sup> The personal character of Seneca fell below his own exalted standard of independence and excellence. But in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, theoretic principles were better exemplified as well as taught.

The resemblance of parts of Stoic teaching to passages in the New Testament has naturally been thought to indicate an influence from one side to the other. We know that the Apostle Paul was not a stranger to Stoic teaching, one of the centres of which was at Tarsus. At Athens he encountered Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.<sup>5</sup> In his address on the Areopagus he quoted, to support his own doctrine, part of a verse found in two heathen poets.<sup>6</sup> Passages in Epictetus in their import, and to some extent in phraseology, remind us of passages in the Evangelists. Of one of those passages<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot observes: "I can hardly believe that the coincidence is quite accidental. Combined with numerous parallels in Seneca's writings collected above (pp. 281 *seq.*), it favors the supposition that our Lord's discourses in some form or other were early known to heathen writers."<sup>8</sup> As to personal character, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are not open to the criticism which Seneca, the tutor of Nero, fully deserves. Epictetus stands at the head of all the Stoic writers in the substance and in the spirit and tone of his utterances. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius contain much that a Christian can read with earnest sympathy. In these writers Stoicism has lost much of its austerity and breathes a gentler spirit. A fictitious correspondence between Paul and the Roman philosopher was composed, probably, in the fourth century. It is possible that through intercourse with Christian slaves Seneca had gained some knowledge of the moral teaching of the gospel. But the evidence of a direct influence from the Christian side we

<sup>1</sup> *De Vita Beata*, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.*, vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xlvii.

<sup>4</sup> See Lightfoot, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 259 *seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Acts xvii. 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ver. 28.

<sup>7</sup> *Discourses*, iii. 22, 2 *seq.*

<sup>8</sup> Lightfoot, *Dissertations*, etc., p. 302, N. 1. See, also, N. 3.

must not exaggerate. The sayings of Seneca, which "at first sight strike us by their resemblance to the language of the Apostles and Evangelists," when they are examined in their connection make a different impression. His most striking sentences are in a setting quite adverse to Christian teaching." "In his fundamental principles, he is a disciple of Zeno."<sup>1</sup>

It is a question how far this widening of sympathy, which we see in Stoicism, sprang from the indirect effect of gospel teaching upon the general currents of thought outside of the pale of the Church. Without denying that an influence of the character described was felt to some extent, it is yet possible to make too much of such a modifying agency. It is an evident fact that the tendency of political events and of philosophic thought — we might say, of the whole course of history — had been conducive to a more cosmopolitan view, a more catholic sympathy. The soil by degrees was becoming ready to receive the good seed of the gospel. The Stoic conception of a universal city, the idea of a common country of the race, are conceptions found in Roman writers from the time of Cicero, and, along with them, at least in theory, a broader spirit of humanity. For an explanation of phenomena of this nature we must not overlook the providential development within the confines of heathenism itself. Apart from Christian influence, they meet us in Lucan, in Plutarch, and in the letters of the younger Pliny.<sup>2</sup>

When we bring the Stoical philosophy into comparison with Christianity, we discern some marked characteristics of a general nature which they have in common. First, Stoicism was an eminently practical system. It sought to determine how men should live, and how they could be prepared to bear trouble, and to die with composure. Secondly, like Christianity, it exalted inward, or spiritual excellence. All outward things are counted as nothing. The Stoic held power, fame, wealth, even health and life, as possessions to be resigned without a murmur. Independence, inward freedom, was deemed the pearl of great price.<sup>3</sup> And thirdly, there are certain sayings, and there are special injunctions, some of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *ibid.*, pp. 276 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, his Letter on the death of his slaves, to Paternus (viii. 16), or his Letter occasioned by the death of the daughter of Fundanus (v. 16).

<sup>3</sup> See the chapter of Epictetus on "Freedom," *Diss.*, iv. 1.

which have been cited, in which the expressions of Stoic teachers approach near to the precepts of the Christian religion.

The differences between Stoicism and the gospel are equally apparent. The resemblance between the two systems is seen, on a deeper study, to be more superficial than one would expect, and the discordance to be radical in its character.

1. The basis of Stoicism, which was a crass materialism, is inconsistent with personal communion with God, and involves the logical consequences of Pantheism. Seneca, along with his pious and humane expressions, inconsistently "identifies God with fate, with necessity, with nature, with the world as a living whole. Hence he speaks of the Supreme Deity, under the designation "Jupiter," in language that would be blasphemous if it fell from the lips of a Christian theist.<sup>1</sup>

2. Stoicism makes virtue the ethical end. But Christianity, while giving the first place to holiness, is not indifferent to happiness. Love, the essential principle in Christian morals, is itself a source of joy, and seeks the happiness of its object. The Cynics were the precursors of the Stoics, and the leaven of Cynicism was never wholly expelled from the Stoic teaching. We find when we scrutinize the Stoical idea of virtue that it is practically self-regarding. It is not the good of others, but a subjective serenity, which is really sought for. The more benevolent feeling in the later type of Stoicism involves only a partial desertion of the essential characteristics of the school.

3. The Stoic definition of virtue is formal, not material. It gives a certain relation of virtue, but not its contents. What that life *is* which is conformed to nature and swayed by reason, is not set forth in the definition.

4. We are furnished with no concrete or exact conception of "nature." "Live according to nature," we are told; but no criterion is presented for distinguishing between the original nature of man, and the corruption resulting from human perversity and sin. It is remarkable that Seneca acknowledges the need of a moral ideal, a pattern by which we can shape our conduct. He advises us to revolve the examples of good men and heroes, like Cato, in order to draw from them guidance; though he admits their imperfection and consequent insufficiency for this end. It is a grand distinction of Christianity that it alone supplies this

<sup>1</sup> For the reference, see Lightfoot, *Dissertations*, etc., pp. 277, 278.

need by presenting human nature, the realized ideal, in its purity and perfection, in the person of Christ.

5. Stoicism supposes a possible incompatibility between the welfare of the individual and the course of the world. It implies a discordance in nature, which is in violation of a primary assumption that the system is harmonious. For the Stoics approved of suicide. Zeno and Cleanthes destroyed their own lives. Seneca praises Cato for killing himself. "If the house smokes, go out of it,"<sup>1</sup> is the laconic mode of advising suicide in case one finds his condition unbearable — a phrase which we find in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. There might be situations, it was held, when it is undignified or dishonorable to continue to live. Poverty, chronic illness, or incipient weakness of mind were deemed a sufficient reason for terminating one's life. It was the means of baffling a tyrant, which nature had given to the weak; as Cassius is made to say: —

"Life, being weary of these worldly bars,  
Never lacks power to dismiss itself."<sup>2</sup>

Seneca says that a man may choose the mode of his death, as one chooses a ship for a journey, or a house to live in. Life and death are among the *adiaphora* — things indifferent, which may be chosen or rejected according to circumstances. How contrary is all this to the Christian feeling! The Christian believes in a Providence which makes all things work together for his good, and believes that there are no circumstances in which he is authorized to lay violent hands upon himself. There is no situation in which he cannot live with honor, and with advantage to himself as long as God chooses to continue him in being. Hence, in the Scriptures there is no express prohibition of suicide, and no need of one.

6. Stoicism exhibits no rational ground for the passive virtues, which are so prominent in the Stoic morals. There is no rational end of the cosmos, no grand and worthy consummation toward which the course of the world is tending. Evil is not overruled to subserve a higher good to emerge at the last. There is no inspiring future on which the eye of the sufferer can be fixed. The goal that bounds his vision is the conflagration of all things. Hence

<sup>1</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses*, I. xxv. 18. The same simile is frequently used. Compare Seneca, *Epp.*, xvii., xxiv., xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act. I. sc. i.



there is no basis for reconciliation to sorrow and evil. Christianity, in the doctrine of the kingdom of God, furnishes the element which Stoicism lacked, and thus provides a ground for resignation under all the ills of life, and amid the confusion and wickedness of the world. For the same reason, the character of Christian resignation is different from the Stoic composure. It is submission to a wise and merciful Father, who sees the end from the beginning. Hence, there is no repression of natural emotions, as of grief in case of bereavement; but these are tempered, and prevented from overmastering the spirit, by trust in the Heavenly Father. In the room of an impassible serenity, an apathy secured by stifling natural sensibility, there is the peace which flows from filial confidence.

7. Much less does Stoicism afford a logical foundation for the active virtues. The doctrine of fatalism, if consistently carried out, paralyzes exertion. And how is the motive for aggressive virtue weakened, when the ultimate result of all effort is annihilation — the destruction of personal life, and the return of the universe to chaos!

8. The cosmopolitan quality of Stoicism was negative. Zeno's idea of a universal community, transcending the barriers imposed by separate nationalities, shows that the ancient order of things failed to satisfy the spirit, aspiring after a wider communion. Striking sentences in Seneca<sup>1</sup> indicate that the limitations essential to ancient thought, which knew no fellowship broader than that of the State, were broken through. But such a community as Zeno and Seneca dreamed of, did not and could not arise, until the kingdom of Christ was established on earth. Then these obscure aspirations, and grand but impracticable visions, became a reality.

9. The predominant motive which the Stoic moralists present for the exercise of forbearance and the kindred virtues is not love, but rather fealty to an ideal of character, the theory that sin is from ignorance, and is involuntary, which turns resentment into pity, and the consideration that everything is fated, and, in its place, useful. The offender is often regarded with a feeling akin to disdain. Among the ten motives to forbearance which Marcus Aurelius addresses to himself are some on which Christianity also insists. The sweeping remark, which is sometimes heard from the pulpit, that the duty of forgiving injuries was not known

<sup>1</sup> See *De Benef.*, iii. 18.

to the heathen moralists, is not true. Clemency is an impulse of human nature as truly as resentment. Christianity introduced no new element into the constitution of the soul. It gave fresh motives for the exercise of forbearance, and, by its power to conquer selfishness, imparted to the benevolent sentiments a control which had never belonged to them before. It is likewise evident that the false metaphysics of the Stoic school played an important part in producing the temper of forbearance which they inculcated. Sin is ignorance, sin is fated, sin is for the best, anger disturbs the peace of the soul, — these are prominent among the reasons for the exercise of forbearance.<sup>1</sup>

10. The self-sufficiency of Stoicism stands in direct antagonism to Christian humility. The independence of the individual, the power to stand alone as regards men and the gods, is the acme of Stoical attainment. The Stoic felt himself on the level of Zeus, both being subject to fate; and he aimed to find the sources of strength and peace within himself. Christianity, on the contrary, finds the highest good in the complete fellowship of man, sensible of his absolute dependence, with God. The starting-point is humility, a feeling the antipode of Stoical pride and self-assertion. It is a noteworthy but not inexplicable fact, that while many from the Platonic school, in the first centuries, became Christian disciples, very few Stoics embraced the Gospel. Notwithstanding the points indicative of resemblance and affinity, there was a radical antagonism between the two systems.

The Greek philosophy reached the limit of its development in New Platonism, as taught in the first centuries of the Christian era by Plotinus, and his successors, Porphyry and Jamblichus, and by Proclus, the last eminent representative of this school.<sup>2</sup> Scepticism, the consequence of the bewildering conflict of philosophical theories, left no resting-place for minds of a religious turn. Their natural refuge was in mysticism, where feeling and intuition supersede the slow and doubtful processes of the intellect. Plotinus found in Platonism the starting-point and principal materials for his speculations; although the reconciliation of philosophies, and especially of the two masters, Plato and Aristotle, was a prominent part of his effort.

<sup>1</sup> See Epictetus, *Discourses*, IV. v. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Plotinus was born A.D. 204, and died A.D. 269.

With Plotinus, the absolute Being, the antecedent of all that exists, is impersonal, the ineffable unity, exalted above all vicissitude and change. The idea of a creative activity on the part of God is thus excluded. Emanation, after a Pantheistic conception, would seem to be the method by which the universe originates from the primary being; yet this notion is discarded, since it would imply division in this being, and the imparting of a portion of its contents. Matter is evil, and the original fountain of evil. The human soul finds its purification only in separating itself from the material part with which it here stands in connection. The highest attainment and perfect blessedness lie in the ecstatic condition, in which the soul rises to the intuition and embrace of the Supreme Entity, sinking for the time its own individuality in this rapturous union with the Infinite.

While the Platonic idea of resemblance to God, as the life and soul of virtue, is held in form, its practical value is lost by this sacrifice of personality in the object toward which we are to aspire. The "civil virtues"—wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice—are retained; but higher than these are placed the purifying or cathartic virtues, by which the soul emancipates itself from subjection to sense; while the highest achievement is the elevation to God, where the consciousness of personal identity is drowned in the beatific contemplation of the Supreme.

This kind of rapture is possible only to elect spirits, who are qualified by superior endowments for so lofty an ascent. The supercilious tone of the ancient philosophy, the notion of an oligarchy of philosophers, to whom the common herd are subservient, is thus maintained to the full in this final phase of Greek thought. "The life which is merely human," says Plotinus, "is twofold, the one being mindful of virtue and partaking of a certain good; but the other pertaining to the vile rabble, and to artificers who minister to the necessities of more worthy men."<sup>1</sup> Asceticism was the natural offspring of a system in which all that is corporeal is evil. Superstition, especially in the form of magic and sorcery, was likewise conspicuous in Jamblichus, and in the other later devotees of this school.

Christianity holds to a possible illumination of the human mind, and to a blessed communion with God. But this is not a boon open only to a few who are raised intellectually above the rest of

<sup>1</sup> *Enn.*, ii. 9.

mankind. The egoistic absorption of the individual in his own mental states, where the idea of doing good is banished from thought, or supplanted by a contempt for mankind generally, is abhorrent to the spirit of the gospel. Self-purification is an end which the Christian sets before him; but he pursues it, not in the way of mystic contemplation, but by the daily practice of all the virtues of character.<sup>1</sup>

What were the actual resources of philosophy? What power had it to assuage grief, to qualify the soul for the exigencies of life, and to deliver it from the fear of death? An instructive answer to this inquiry may be gathered from the works of Cicero. Humanity, in the sense of a philanthropic regard for the race, is a word frequently upon his lips. In his political course, however, and in dealing with ethical questions in the concrete, Cicero too often failed to exemplify these liberal maxims. There is a like failure to realize practically his religious theories. He appropriates not without sympathy whatever is best in the Greek philosophical writers before him. In his work on the Nature of the Gods, and in that on Divination, he shows the folly of polytheism, and of the cultus connected with it. He wishes that it were as easy to discover the truth as to confute error.<sup>2</sup> He is a Theist, preferring to follow Plato in the belief in a personal God, rather than the Stoics in their dogma of the impersonal spirit of nature. He finds in the wonderful order of the world irresistible evidence of the supreme Mind. He sees a corroboration of this faith in the concurrent judgments of men, as evinced in the universal prevalence of religion. Equally strenuous is he in maintaining that the soul is immaterial and immortal.<sup>3</sup> But we have the opportunity of testing the character of his convictions when he is brought into circumstances of keen distress. What was the practical force and value of these opinions? We can see from the Tusculan Discussions which he composed when he was sixty-two years of age, after the death of his beloved daughter Tullia, and from his correspondence after this blow with Servius Sulpicius. When he is himself plunged into affliction, we find that neither

<sup>1</sup> This difference is clearly set forth by Neander (*Wissenschaftl. Abhandl.*, p. 213), in an essay to which the present writer owes the early stimulus given to the study of the subject of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> *De Nat. Deorum*, i. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g. Disp. Tusc.*, I. xxvii., xxviii.

he nor his intimate friends who strive to console him think of the truths on which he has eloquently descanted. There is a striking contrast between the discourses composed for the public eye, and the familiar letters which passed between him and these friends. In neither of his letters to Sulpicius is there the slightest reference to God, or to a future life. Cicero's treatise on Old Age is another monument of the vain attempt to elevate considerations which, when merely subordinate and auxiliary, have their value, into prime sources of consolation. The doctrine of the future life, even in Plutarch, is not set forth as a firm conviction, but only as a probability; and he makes an argument in behalf of serenity, on the hypothesis, which is admitted to be not absolutely disproved, that death is the dissipation of our being, and the termination, therefore, of pain as well as of joy. The Stoic element which mingled in the character of Socrates, an element which is quite discernible in Plato's account of his Apology to his judges, crops out occasionally in the Platonic Dialogues, though connected with other tenets not consonant with the Stoical system.

In Cicero's time, and in the century that followed, faith in the immortality of the soul is mostly confined to minds imbued with the Platonic influence. Julius Cæsar treated the idea of a survival of the soul as a chimera.<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, in the beautiful passage at the close of the *Life of Agricola*, refers to the opinion of philosophers that 'exalted souls may survive the body, but treats it as only a possibility.

Philosophy yielded a certain amount of strength and solace to able and cultivated men; an increased amount, we may say, among the Romans, in the second century as compared with the age that witnessed the introduction of Christianity. Philosophers sometimes acted, from their point of view, not unworthily the part of spiritual counsellors. The Stoics looked forward to a continuance for an indefinite, though limited, period, of personal life beyond the grave. Platonists may not frequently have cherished a larger hope. But it must be remembered that philosophy exerted no appreciable influence on the mass of mankind, either in the way of restraint or of inspiration. They were left in the adversities of life, in sickness, in bereavement, and in death, to such consolation as was to be drawn from the old mythological

<sup>1</sup> *Sallust* (B.C. 50).



system. The epitaphs in memory of the dead in some cases betray a gross materialism, in other cases a bitter and resentful despair; while many express a hope in behalf of the beloved who are gone, which is slow to be quenched in the human heart.

When we look back upon the ancient philosophy in its entire course, we find in it nothing nearer to Christianity than the saying of Plato that man is to resemble God. But, on the path of speculation, how defective and discordant are the conceptions of God! And if God were adequately known, how shall the fetters of evil be broken, and the soul attain to its ideal? It is just these questions that Christianity meets through the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. God, the Head of that universal society on which Cicero delighted to dwell, and ruling with no divided control, is brought, in all His holiness and love, near to the apprehension and to the hearts, not of a coterie of philosophers merely, but of the humble and ignorant. The words of Jesus, spoken of the Hebrew Lawgivers and Prophets, are applicable to the best of the Stoic Sages, and to Plato — unconscious though they were of their intermediary function — “I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.” There is a real release from the burden of evil, achieved through Christ, actually for himself in his own spotless purity, and potentially for mankind. How transfigured in their whole character are the ethical maxims which, as to form, may not be without a parallel in heathen sages! Forgiveness, forbearance, pity for the poor, universal compassion, are no longer abstractions, derived from speculation on the attributes of Deity. They shine out in the example of God. He has so dealt with us in the mission and death of His Son.<sup>1</sup> The Cross of Christ was the practical power that abolished artificial distinctions among mankind, and made human brotherhood a reality. In this new setting, ethical precepts gain a depth of earnestness and a force of impression which ethnic philosophy could never impart. We might as well expect from starlight the brightness and warmth of a noonday sun.

<sup>1</sup> See Col. iii. 12; Eph. iv. 32; 1 Pet. ii. 18; 2 Cor. x. 1; Luke xxii. 27; John xiii. 14; 1 John iii. 16; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Eph. v. 2; Phil. ii. 7; and the New Testament *passim*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONSCIOUSNESS IN JESUS OF A SUPERNATURAL CALLING RENDERED CREDIBLE BY HIS SINLESS CHARACTER

WRITERS on the evidences of Christianity, after some introductory observations on natural theology, generally take up at once the subject of the genuineness and credibility of the Gospels, for the obvious reason that in these books, if anywhere, is preserved the authentic testimony to the facts connected with the life of Jesus. There are reasons, however, of special weight at present, why this leading topic may well be deferred to a somewhat later stage of the discussion. Notwithstanding differences of opinion respecting the authorship and date of the New Testament narratives, there are not wanting grounds for accepting as true the essential facts which form the basis of the Christian faith. It is important to remember, that besides these books, there exist other memorials, written and unwritten, of the events with which we are concerned. We have St. Paul's Epistles,—the most prominent of which are not contested even by the most sceptically disposed,—the oldest of which, probably, the first to the Thesalonians, was written certainly as early as the year 53. But, more than this, there are cogent proofs, and there are strong probabilities which may be gathered from known and admitted consequences of the life of Jesus among men. We can reason backwards. Even a cursory glance at Christianity in the course of its acknowledged history, and as an existing phenomenon standing before the eyes of all, is enough to convince everybody that something very weighty and momentous took place in Palestine in connection with the short career of Jesus. There followed, for example, indisputably, the preaching, the character, the martyrdom, of Apostles appointed by him. The Church started into being. The composition of the Gospels themselves, whenever and by whomsoever it occurred, was an effect traceable ultimately to the life of Jesus.

How came they to be written? How did what they relate of him come to be believed? How came miracles to be attributed to him, and not to John the Baptist and to Palestinian rabbis of the time? Effects imply adequate causes. A pool of water in the street may be explained by a summer shower, but not so the Gulf Stream. Effects imply such causes as are adapted to produce them. The results of a movement disclose its nature. When we are confronted by historical phenomena, complex and far-reaching in their character, we find that no solution will hold which subtracts anything essential from the actual historic antecedents. If we eliminate any of the conjoined causes, we find that something in the aggregate effect is left unexplained. Moreover, the elements that compose a state of things which gives rise to definite historical consequences are braided together. They do not easily allow themselves to be disconnected from one another. Pry out one stone from an arch, and the entire structure will fall. It is a proverb that a liar must have a long memory. It is equally true that an historical critic exposes himself to peril whenever he ventures on the task of constructing a situation in the past, a combination of circumstances, materially diverse from the reality. Events as they actually occur constitute a web from which no part can be torn without being instantly missed. History, then, has a double verification; first, in the palpable effects that are open to everybody's inspection; and secondly, in the connected relation, the internal cohesion, of the particulars that compose the scene. Let any one try the experiment of subtracting from the world's history any signal event, like the battle of Marathon, the teaching of Aristotle, or the usurpation of Julius Cæsar. He will soon be convinced of the futility of the attempt; and this apart from the violence that must be done to direct historical testimonies.

Matthew Arnold tells us, that "there is no evidence of the establishment of our four Gospels as a gospel canon, or even of their existence as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century."<sup>1</sup> This statement in both of its parts needs correction. The theory at the basis of such views, of a gradual selection of the four out of a large group of competitive Gospels, and of the growth of them by a slow process of accretion, is untenable. It can be proved to rest on a misconception of the state of things in the early Church, and to be open to other insu-

<sup>1</sup> *God and the Bible*, p. 224.

perable objections. But let the assumption contained in the quotation above be allowed, for the present, to stand. Such authors as Strauss, Renan, Keim, notwithstanding their rejection of received opinions respecting the authorship and date of the Gospels, do not hesitate to draw from them the materials for their biographies of Jesus. They undertake, to be sure, to subject them to a sifting process. We have to complain that their dissection is too often arbitrary, being dictated by some presupposition merely subjective, or determined by the exigencies of a theory. Professing to be scientific, they are warped by what is really an unscientific bias. But large portions of the evangelic narratives they hold to be authentic. If they did not do this, they would have to lay down the pen. Their vocation as historians would be gone. We may inquire then what will follow, if we take for granted no more of the contents of the Gospels than what is conceded to be true, — no more, at any rate, than what can be proved on the spot to be veritable history. Waiving, for the moment, — as we have done in the foregoing pages, — controverted questions about the origin of these books, let us see what conclusions can be fairly deduced from portions of them which no rational critic will consider fictitious. Having proceeded as far as we may on this path, it will then be in order to inquire whether the Gospels are not to be classed in the list of genuine and trustworthy narratives, in opposition to the opinion that they are of later origin, and compounded of fact and fiction.

I. The known assertions of Jesus respecting his calling, and his authority among men, if they are not well founded, imply either a lack of mental sanity, or a deep perversion of character; but neither of these last alternatives can be reasonably accepted.

No one can reasonably doubt that Jesus professed to be the Christ—the Messiah. The time and manner of making this declaration can be considered hereafter. This the apostles from the first, in their preaching, declared him to be. They went out preaching, first of all, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. It was on account of this claim that he was put to death. Before his judges, Jewish and Roman, he for the most part kept silent. Seeing that they were blinded by passion, or swayed by purely selfish motives, he abstained from useless appeals to reason and conscience. But he broke silence to avow that he was indeed

the king, the "Son of God,"—a title of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> It was held by the Jewish magistrates to be a blasphemous pretension.<sup>2</sup> He made it clear, then and at other times, what sort of a kingship it was which he asserted for himself. It was not a temporal sovereignty, "a kingdom of this world"; no force was to be used in the founding or extension of it. It was, however, a control far deeper and wider than any secular rule. He was the monarch of souls. His right was derived immediately from God. His legislation reached down to the inmost motives of action, and covered in its comprehensive principles all the particulars of conduct. In the Sermon on the Mount he spoke with an authority which was expressly contrasted with that of all previous lawgivers counted to be inspired by those who heard Him—"But *I* say unto you," etc.<sup>3</sup> To his precepts he annexed penalties and rewards which were to be endured and received even beyond the grave. Nay, his call was to all to come to him, to repose in him implicit trust as a moral and religious guide. He laid claim to the absolute allegiance of every soul. To those who complied he promised blessedness in the life to come. There can be no doubt that he assumed to exercise the prerogative of pardoning sin. Apart from declarations, uttered in an authoritative tone, of the terms on which God would forgive sin,<sup>4</sup> he assured particular individuals of the pardon of their transgressions. He taught that his death stood in the closest relation to the remission of sins by the judge of all the earth. The divine clemency toward the sinful is somehow linked to it. He founded a rite on this efficacy of his death,—a part of his teaching which is not only recorded by three of the gospel writers, but is further placed beyond doubt by the testimony of the apostle Paul.<sup>5</sup> He uttered, there is no reason to doubt, the largest predictions concerning the spread of his spiritual empire. It was to have the transforming power of leaven. It was to be like the plant which springs from the tiny mustard-seed.<sup>6</sup> The agency of God would be directed to securing its progress and triumph. The Providential government of the world would be shaped with reference to this end.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 64, xxvii. 11, cf. vers. 29, 37; Mark xiv. 62, xv. 2, cf. vers. 9, 12, 18, 26; Luke xxii. 70, xxiii. 2, cf. vers. 2, 38; John xviii. 33, 37, cf. ver. 39, xix. 3, 14, 19, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 22, 28, 34, 39, 44.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 26, vi. 14, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xiii. 31-33; Luke xiii. 19-21.



We have stated in moderate terms the claims put forth by Jesus. These statements, or their equivalent, enter into the core of the evangelic tradition. Not only are they admitted to be authentic passages in the Gospels, but their historic reality is presupposed in the first teaching of Christianity by the Apostles, and must be assumed in order to account for the rise of the Church.

Let it be remembered that these pretensions are put forth by a person with no advantages of social position. He is brought up in a village not held in esteem by the religious leaders of the time. On his fellow-villagers generally he has made no lasting impression. He has barely passed the limit of youth. When he appears among them as a teacher, they refer to his connection with a family in the midst of them in a tone to imply that they had known of nothing to kindle a remarkable expectation concerning him.<sup>1</sup> For this passage in the Gospel narrative bears indisputable marks of authenticity.

What shall be said of such claims, put forth by such a person, or by any human being? No doubt the first impression in such a case would be, that he had lost his reason. If there is not wilful imposture, it would be said, it must be a case of mental derangement. Nothing else can explain so monstrous a delusion. Imagine that a young man who has always lived quietly at home in a country town presents himself in one of our large cities, and announces himself there, and to his fellow-townsmen, and wherever else he can gain a hearing, as the representative of God; summons all, the high and low, the educated and ignorant, to accept him as a special messenger from Heaven, to obey him implicitly, to break every tie which interferes with absolute obedience to him, — to hate, as it were, father and mother, wife and children, for his cause. He proceeds, we will suppose, in the name of God, to issue injunctions for the regulation of the thoughts even, as well as of external conduct, to forgive the sins of one and another evil-doer, and to warn all who disbelieve in him and disregard his commandments, that retribution awaits them in the future life. It being made clear that he is not an impostor, the inference would be drawn at once that his reason is unsettled. This, in fact, is the common judgment in such cases. To entertain the belief that one is the Messiah is a recognized species of insanity. It is taken as proof positive of mental aberration. This is the verdict of the courts.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 55-57; Mark vi. 3, 4; Luke iv. 22.

Erskine, the famous Scottish lawyer, in one of his celebrated speeches,<sup>1</sup> adverts to an instance of this kind of lunacy. A man who had been confined in a mad-house prosecuted the keeper, Dr. Sims, and his own brother, for unlawful detention. Erskine, before he had been informed of the precise nature of his delusion, examined the prosecutor without eliciting any signs of mental unsoundness. At length, learning what the particular character of the mental disorder was, the great lawyer, with affected reverence, apologized for his unbecoming treatment of the witness in presuming thus to interrogate him. The man expressed his forgiveness, and then, with the utmost gravity, in the face of the whole court, said, "I am the Christ!" He deemed himself "the Lord and Saviour of mankind." Nothing further, of course, was required for the acquittal of the persons charged with unjustly confining him.

When it is said that claims like those of Jesus, unless they can be sustained, are indicative of mental derangement, we may be pointed, by way of objection, to founders of other systems of religion. But among these no parallel instance can be adduced to disprove the position here taken. Confucius can hardly be styled a religious teacher; he avoided, as far as he could, all reference to the supernatural. His wisdom was of man, and professed no higher origin. A sage, a sagacious moralist, he is not to be classified with pretenders to divine illumination. Of Zoroaster we know so little, that it is utterly impossible to tell what he affirmed respecting his relation to God. The very date of his birth is now set back by scholars to a point at least five hundred years earlier than the time previously assigned for it. Of him, one of the authorities remarks, "The events of his life are almost all enshrouded in darkness, to dispel which will be forever impossible, should no authentic historical records be discovered in Bactria, his home."<sup>2</sup> A still later writer goes farther: "When he lived, no one knows; and every one agrees that all that the Parsis and the Greeks tell of him is mere legend, through which no solid historical facts can be arrived at."<sup>3</sup> Thus the history of the princi-

<sup>1</sup> In behalf of Hadfield, indicted for firing a pistol at the king.

<sup>2</sup> Haug, *Essays on the Laws, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (2d ed., Boston, 1868), p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> *The Zend-Avesta, translated by J. Darmesteter* (Oxford, 1880), Intr., p. lxxvi.

pal teacher of one of the purest and most ancient of the ethnic religions is veiled in hopeless obscurity. With respect to Buddha, or Sakyamuni, it is not impossible to separate main facts in his career from the mass of legendary matter which has accumulated about them. But the office which he took on himself was not even that of a prophet. He was a philanthropist, a reformer. The supernatural features of his history have been grafted upon it by later generations. An able scholar has described Buddhism as "a religion which ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul."<sup>1</sup> "Buddhism is no religion at all, and certainly no theology, but rather a system of duty, morality, and benevolence, without real deity, prayer, or priest."<sup>2</sup> Mohammed unquestionably believed himself inspired, and clothed with a divine commission. Beyond the ferment excited in his mind by the vivid perception of a single great, half-forgotten truth, we are aided in explaining his self-delusion, as far as it was a delusion, by due attention to morbid constitutional tendencies which occasioned epileptic fits, as well as to reveries and trances. Moreover, there were vices of character which played an important part in nourishing his fanatical convictions. These must be taken into the account. It is not maintained here that religious enthusiasm which passes the limits of truth should always raise a suspicion of insanity. We are not called upon by the necessities of the argument to point out the boundary-line where reason is unhinged. Socrates was persuaded that a demon or spirit within kept him back from unwise actions. Whether right or wrong in this belief, he was no doubt a man of sound mind. One may erroneously conceive himself to be under supernatural guidance without being literally irrational. But if Socrates, a mortal like the men about him, had solemnly and persistently declared himself to be the chosen delegate of the Almighty, and to have the authority and the prerogatives which Jesus claimed for himself; had he declared, just before drinking the hemlock, that his death was the means or the guaranty of the forgiveness of sins,—the sanity of his mind would not have been so clear.

Nor is there validity in the objection that times have changed, so that an inference which would justly follow upon the assertion of so exalted claims by a person now living would not be warranted

<sup>1</sup> See *Encycl. Brit.*, art. "Buddhism," by J. W. Rhys Davis.

<sup>2</sup> Monier Williams, *Hinduism* (London, 1877), p. 74.

in the case of one living in that remote age, and in the community to which Jesus belonged. The differences between that day and this, and between Palestine, and America or England, are not of a quality to lessen materially the difficulty of supposing that a man in his right mind could falsely believe himself to be the King and Redeemer of mankind. The conclusive answer to the objection is, that the claims of Jesus were actually treated as preposterous. They were scoffed at as most presumptuous by his contemporaries. He was put to death for bringing them forward. Shocking blasphemy was thought to be involved in such pretensions. It is true that individuals in that era set up to be the Messiah, especially in the tremendous contest with the Romans that ensued. But these false Messiahs were impostors, or men in whom imposture and wild fanaticism were mingled.

Mental disorder was then, and has been since, imputed to Jesus. At the beginning of his public labors at Capernaum, his relatives, hearing what excitement he was causing, and how the people thronged upon him, so that he and his disciples could not snatch a few minutes in which to take refreshment, for the moment feared that he was "beside himself."<sup>1</sup> No doubt will be raised about the truth of this incident. It is not a circumstance which any disciple, earlier or later, would have been disposed to invent. The Pharisees and scribes charged that he was possessed of a demon. According to the fourth Gospel, they said, "He hath a demon, and is mad."<sup>2</sup> The credibility of the fourth evangelist here is assumed by Renan.<sup>3</sup> In Mark, the charge that he is possessed by the prince of evil spirits immediately follows the record of the attempt of his relatives "to lay hold on him."<sup>4</sup> Not improbably, the evangelist means to imply that mental aberration was involved in the accusation of the scribes, as it is expressly said to have been imputed to him by his family. This idea of mental alienation has not come alone from the Galilean family in their amazement at the commotion excited by Jesus, and in their solicitude on account of, his unremitting devotion to his work. Nor has it been confined

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 21, cf. ver. 32. In ver. 21 λέγον may have an indefinite subject, and refer to a spreading report which the relatives — οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ — had heard: so Ewald, Weiss, *Marcusevangelium ad loc.* Or it may denote what was said by the relatives themselves: so Meyer.

<sup>2</sup> *μαλ' ἔστιν*, John x. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed., p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Mark iii. 21.

to the adversaries who were stung by his rebukes, and dreaded the loss of their hold on the people. A recent writer, after speaking of Jesus as swept onward, in the latter part of his career, by a tide of enthusiasm, says, "Sometimes one would have said that his reason was disturbed." "The grand vision of the kingdom of God made him dizzy."<sup>1</sup> "His temperament, inordinately impassioned, carried him every moment beyond the limits of human nature."<sup>2</sup> These suggestions of Renan are cautiously expressed. He broaches, as will be seen hereafter, an hypothesis still more revolting, for the sake of clearing away difficulties which his Atheistic or Pantheistic philosophy does not enable him otherwise to surmount. Yet he does, though not without some signs of timidity, more than insinuate that enthusiasm was carried to the pitch of derangement. Reason is said to have lost its balance.

The words and conduct of Jesus can be considered extravagant only on the supposition that his claims, his assertions respecting himself, were exaggerated. His words and actions were not out of harmony with these claims. It is in these pretensions, if anywhere, that the proof of mental alienation must be sought. There is nothing in the teaching of Christ, there is nothing in his actions, to countenance in the least the notion that he was dazed and deluded by morbidly excited feeling. Who can read the Sermon on the Mount, and not be impressed with the perfect sobriety of his temperament? Everywhere, in discourse and dialogue, there is a vein of deep reflection. He meets opponents, even cavillers, with arguments. When he is moved to indignation, there is no loss of a cool self-possession. There is no vague outpouring of anger, as of a torrent bursting its barriers. Every item in the denunciation of the Pharisees is coupled with a distinct specification justifying it.<sup>3</sup> No single idea is seized upon and magnified at the expense of other truths of equal moment. No one-sided view of human nature is held up for acceptance. A broad, humane spirit pervades the precepts which he uttered. Asceticism, the snare of religious reformers, is foreign both to his teaching and his example. Shall the predictions relative to the spread of his kingdom, and to its influence on the world of mankind, be attributed to a distempered fancy? But how has history vindicated them! What is the history of the Christian ages but

<sup>1</sup> "Lui donnait le vertige."

<sup>2</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed., p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxiii.



the verification of that forecast which Jesus had of the effect of his work, brief though it was? Men who give up important parts of the Christian creed discern, nevertheless, "the sweet reasonableness" which characterizes the teaching, and, equally so, the conduct, of Jesus. The calm wisdom, the inexhaustible depth becomes daily more and more apparent as time flows on—is that the offspring of a disordered brain? That penetration into human nature which laid bare the secret springs of action, which knew men better than they knew themselves, piercing through every mask—did that belong to an intellect unbalanced?

Jesus was no enthusiast, if that designation is taken to imply an overplus of fervor or a heated imagination. If fanaticism is distinguished from bare enthusiasm, as according to Isaac Taylor it should be, by having in it an ingredient of hatred, no reproach could be more unmerited than the ascription to Jesus of this odious quality.

If we reject the hypothesis of mental weakness or disorder, we are driven to the alternative of accepting the consciousness of Jesus, with respect to his office and calling, as sane and veracious, or of attributing to him moral depravation. He exalts himself above the level of mankind. He places himself on an eminence inaccessible to all other mortals. He conceives himself to stand in a relation both to God and to the human race to which no other human being can aspire. If, to speak of one thing, the remission of sins is declared by churches or by the clergy, it is always made conditional on repentance, and by an authority considered to be derived from Christ. It would be a wild dream for any other human being to imagine himself to be possessed of the prerogatives which Jesus quietly assumes to exercise. Is this mere assumption? What an amount of self-ignorance does it not involve! What self-exaggeration is implied in it! If moral rectitude contains the least guaranty of self-knowledge, if purity of character qualifies a man to know himself, and guard himself from seeking to soar to an elevation to which he has not a shadow of a right, then what shall be said of him who is guilty of self-deification, or of what is almost equivalent? On the contrary, the holiness of Jesus, if he was holy, is a ground for reposing confidence in his convictions respecting himself.

If there is good reason to conclude that Jesus was a sinless man, there is an equal reason for believing in him. It has been said,

even by individuals among the defenders of the faith, that, independently of miracles, his perfect sinlessness cannot be established. "But where," it has been said, "is the proof of perfect sinlessness? No outward life and conduct could prove this, because goodness depends on the inward motive, and the perfection of the inward motive is not proved by the outward act. Exactly the same act may be perfect or imperfect, according to the spirit of the doer. The same language of indignation against the wicked which issues from our Lord's mouth might be uttered by an imperfect good man who mixed human frailty with the emotion."<sup>1</sup> The importance of miracles as the counterpart and complement of evidence of a different nature is not questioned. It is not denied, that if, by proof, demonstration is meant, such proof of the sinlessness of Jesus is precluded. Reasoning on such a matter is, of course, probable. Nevertheless, it may be fully convincing. On the same species of reasoning is the belief in the testimony to miracles founded. How do we judge, respecting any one whom we well know, whether he possesses one trait of character, or lacks another? How do we form a decided opinion, in many cases, with regard to the motives of a particular act, or in respect to his habitual temper? It is by processes of inference precisely similar to those by which we conclude that Jesus was pure and holy. There are indications of *perfect* purity and holiness which exclude rational doubt upon the point. There are phenomena, positive and negative, which presuppose faultless perfection—which baffle explanation on any other hypothesis. If there are facts which it is impossible to account for, in case moral fault is conceived to exist, then the existence of moral fault is disproved.

The virtue of Jesus, be it observed, was not an innocence which was not tried by temptation, a virtue not tested in contact with solicitations to evil. The story of the temptations that assailed Jesus at the outset of his ministry is a picture of enticements that could not be escaped in the situation in which he was placed. To use for his own personal comfort and advantage the power given of God for ends wholly unselfish, to presume on the favor and miraculous protection of God, by rash and needless exposure to perils, by adopting means, not consonant with the divine plan and will, with a view to secure a rapid attainment of the end

<sup>1</sup> Mozley, *Lectures on Miracles*, p. 11.

set before him, the building up of the kingdom of righteousness on earth—such were the temptations thrust in his way at the beginning, and through the entire period of his contact with the popular demands and expectations. The perfection of his character was the result of an unerring resistance to specious allurements, which continued to the last. When the final test was reached, his words, which had been the voice of his soul from the outset, were, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”<sup>1</sup>

It may be thought that we are at least incapable of proving the sinlessness of Jesus until we have first established the ordinary belief as to the origin of the Gospels. This idea is also a mistake. Our impression of the character of Christ results from a great number of incidents and conversations recorded of him. The data of the tradition are miscellaneous, multiform. If there had been matter, which, if handed down, would have tended to an estimate of Jesus in the smallest degree less favorable than is deducible from the tradition as it stands, who was competent, even if anybody had been disposed, to eliminate it? What disciples, earlier or later, had the keenness of moral discernment which would have been requisite in order thus to sift the evangelic narrative? Something, to say the least,—some words, some actions, or omissions to act,—would have been left to stain the fair picture. Moreover, the conception of the character of Jesus which grows up in the mind on a perusal of the gospel records has a unity, a harmony, a unique individuality, a verisimilitude. This proves that the narrative passages which call forth this image in the reader's mind are substantially faithful. The characteristics of Jesus which are collected from them must have belonged to an actual person.

In an exhaustive argument for the sinlessness of Jesus, one point would be the impression which his character made on others. What were the reproaches of his enemies? If there were faults, vulnerable places, his enemies would have found them out. But the offences which they laid to his charge are virtues. He associated with the poor and with evil-doers. But this was from love, and from a desire to do them good. He was willing to do good on the sabbath; that is, he was not a slave to ceremony. He honored the spirit, not the letter, of law. He did not bow to the authority of pretenders to superior sanctity. Leaving out of view

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 42.

his claim to be the Christ, we cannot think of a single accusation that does not redound to his credit. There is no reason to distrust the evangelic tradition, which tells us that a thief at his side on the cross was struck with his innocence, and said, "This man hath done nothing amiss." The centurion exclaimed, "Truly, this was a righteous man!" Since the narratives do not conceal the insults offered to Jesus by the Roman soldiers, and the taunts of one of the malefactors, there is no ground for ascribing to invention the incidents last mentioned. But what impression as to his character was made on the company of his intimate associates? They were not obtuse, unthinking followers. They often wondered that he did not take a different way of founding his kingdom, and spoke out their dissatisfaction. They were not incapable observers and critics of character. Peculiarities that must have excited their surprise, they frankly related; as that he wept, was at times physically exhausted, prayed in an agony of supplication. These circumstances must have come from the original reporters. It is certain, that, had they marked anything in Jesus which was indicative of moral infirmity, the spell that bound them to him would have been broken. Their faith in him would have been dissolved. It is certain that in the closest association with him, in private and in public, they were more and more struck with his blameless excellence. One of the most convincing proofs of the perfect soundness of his moral judgment and of its absolute freedom from personal bias, such even as an unconscious influence of personal affection, as well as of his unshrinking fidelity, is seen in his faithful dealing with his devoted and beloved Disciples. Ready to pardon their deviations from right under the pressure of temptation, his relation to them, even to the most zealous of his followers, subtracted not an iota from the pointed rebuke which he saw to be merited and for their own good required. They parted from him at last with the unanimous, undoubting conviction that not the faintest stain of moral guilt rested on his spirit. He was immaculate. This was a part of their preaching. Without that conviction on their part, Christianity never could have gained a foothold on the earth.

There is not room here to dwell on that marvellous unison of virtues in the character of Jesus,—virtues often apparently contrasted. It was not piety without philanthropy, or philanthropy without piety, but both in the closest union. It was love to God

and love to man, each in perfection, and both forming one spirit. It was not compassion alone, not disunited from the sentiment of justice ; nor was it rectitude, austere, unpitying. It was compassion *and* justice, the spirit of love *and* the spirit of truth, neither clashing with the other. There was a deep concern for the soul and the life to come, but no cynical indifference to human suffering and well-being now. There was courage that quailed before no adversary, but without the least ingredient of reckless daring, and observant of the limits of prudence. There was a dignity which needed no insignia to uphold it, yet was mixed with a sweet humility. There was rebuke for the proudest, a relentless unmasking of sanctimonious oppressors of the poor, and the gentlest words for the child, the suffering invalid, the penitent evil-doer. There was a deep concern for the good of large bodies of men, for the nation, for the race of mankind, yet a heartfelt affection for the single family, a tender interest in the humblest individual, even when unworthy.

There is one fact which ought to dispel every shadow of doubt as to the absolute sinlessness of Jesus. Let this fact be seriously pondered. He was utterly free from self-accusation, from the consciousness of fault ; whereas, had there been a failure in duty, his sense of guilt would have been intense and overwhelming. This must have been the case had there been only a single lapse, — one instance, even in thought, of infidelity to God and conscience. But no such offence could have existed by itself ; it would have tainted the character. Sin does not come and disappear, like a passing cloud. Sin is never a microscopic taint. Sin is self-propagating. Its first step is a fall and the beginning of a habit. We reiterate that a consciousness of moral defect in such an one as we know that Jesus was, and as he is universally conceded to have been, must infallibly have betrayed itself in the clearest manifestations of conscious guilt, of penitence, or of remorse. The extreme delicacy of his moral sense is perfectly obvious. His moral criticism goes down to the secret recesses of the heart. He demands, be it observed, *self*-judgment : “ First cast the beam out of *thine own* eye ; ” “ Judge not.” His condemnation of moral evil is utterly unsparing ; the very roots of it in illicit desire are to be extirpated. He knows how sinful men are. He teaches them *all* to pray, “ Forgive us our debts ” ; yet there is not a scintilla of evidence that he ever felt the need of



offering that prayer for himself. From beginning to end there is not a lisp of self-blame. He prays often, he needs help from above ; but there is no confession of personal unworthiness. Men generally are reminded of their sins when they are overtaken by calamity. The ejaculations of Jesus in the presence of his intimate associates, when he was sinking under the burden of mental sorrow, are transmitted, — and there is no sign whatever of a disposition on the part of disciples to cloak his mental experiences, or misrepresent them, — but not the slightest consciousness of error is betrayed in these spontaneous outpourings of feeling. “His was a piety with no consciousness of sin, and no expression of repentance.”<sup>1</sup>

Let the reader contrast this unbroken peace of conscience with the self-chastisement of an upright spirit which has become alive to the obligations of divine law, — the same law that Jesus inculcated. “Oh, wretched man that I am !” No language short of this outcry will avail to express the abject distress of Paul. There are no bounds to his self-abasement ; he is “the chief of sinners.” The burden of self-condemnation is too heavy for such conscientious minds to carry. Had the will of Jesus ever succumbed to the tempter, had moral evil ever found entrance into his heart, is it possible that his humiliation would have been less, or less manifest ? That serene self-approbation would have fled from his soul. He would have partaken of the spirit which he depicted in the penitent Publican. Had the Great Teacher, whose words are a kind of audible conscience ever attending us, and are more powerful than anything else to quicken the sense of obligation — had he so little moral sensibility as falsely to acquit himself of blame before God ? It is psychologically impossible that he should have been blameworthy without knowing it, without feeling it vividly, and without exhibiting compunction, or remorse and shame, in the plainest manner. There was no such consciousness, there was no such expression of guilt. Therefore he was without sin.

We have said that there is nothing in the evangelic tradition to imply the faintest consciousness of moral evil in the mind of Jesus. A single passage has been by some falsely construed as containing such an implication. It may be worth while to notice it. To the ruler who inquired what he should do to secure eternal

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, etc., p. 50.

life, Jesus is said to have answered, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."<sup>1</sup> There is another reading of the passage in Matthew, which is adopted by Tischendorf: "Why askest thou me concerning the good? There is one," etc.<sup>2</sup> This answer is not unsuitable to the question, "What good thing shall I do?" It points the inquirer to God. It is fitted to suggest that goodness is not in particular doings, but begins in a connecting of the soul with God. We cannot be certain, however, whether Jesus made exactly this response, or said what is given in the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. If the latter hypothesis be correct, it is still plain that his design was simply to direct the inquirer to God, whose will is the fountain of law. He disclaims the epithet "good," and applies it to God alone, meaning that God is the primal source of all goodness. Such an expression is in full accord with the usual language of Jesus descriptive of his dependence on God. The goodness of Jesus, though without spot or flaw, was progressive in its development; and this distinction from the absolute goodness of God might justify the phraseology which he employed.<sup>3</sup> The humility of Jesus in his reply to the ruler was far enough from that of an offender against the divine law. Its ground was totally diverse.

There is a single occurrence narrated in the fourth Gospel, which may be appropriately referred to in this place.<sup>4</sup> Jesus said, "I go not up to this feast:" the "yet" in both the Authorized and the Revised Versions probably forms no part of the text. "But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up, not openly, but, as it were, in secret." Can anybody think that the author of the Gospel, whoever he was, understands, and means that his readers shall infer, that the first statement to the brethren was an intentional untruth? It is possible that new considerations, not mentioned in the brief narration, induced Jesus to alter his purpose. This is the opinion of Meyer.<sup>5</sup> He may have waited, as on certain other occasions, for a divine intimation, which came sooner than it was looked for.<sup>6</sup> "My time," he had said to his

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 17, cf. Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ;

<sup>3</sup> See Weiss, *Matthäusevangelium*, ad loc.; *Biblische Theol.*, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> John vii. 8, 10, 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Evang. Johannis*, ad loc.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. vers. 6, 7, and ii. 4. So Weiss, in Meyer's *Komm. über das Evang. Johann.*, ad loc.

brethren, "is not yet full come." It was perhaps signified to him that he could go to Jerusalem without then precipitating the crisis. He had felt that to accompany the festal caravan would be to make prematurely a public demonstration adapted to rouse and combine his adversaries. In fact, he did not show himself at Jerusalem until the first part of the feast was over. It is not unlikely that he travelled over Samaria.

One of the Evangelists relates that, on a certain occasion, when he was indirectly prompted by his mother to work a miracle, he said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"<sup>1</sup> Mine hour is not yet come." It was only a prompting from above, no suggestion from a human source, which he could heed in a matter of this kind. In the same spirit the Disciples were told that there was a bond of loyalty more sacred than regard for the nearest and dearest relatives.<sup>2</sup> As to the designation, "Woman," it implies not the least coldness of feeling. The same Evangelist tells us that so Jesus addressed his mother from the cross when he committed her to the tender care of his Follower.<sup>3</sup> So, also, he designated Mary Magdalene when she was weeping at the tomb.<sup>4</sup>

Complaints have been made of the severity of his denunciation of the Pharisees. It is just these passages, however, and such as these, which free Christianity from the stigma cast upon it by the patronizing critics who style it "a sweet Galilean vision," and find in it nothing but a solace "for tender and weary souls."<sup>5</sup> It is no fault in the teaching of Jesus that in it righteousness speaks out in trumpet-tones. There is no unseemly passion, but there is no sentimentalism. Hypocrisy and cruelty are painted in their proper colors. That retribution is in store for the iniquity which steels itself against the incentives to reform is a part of the Gospel which no right-minded man would wish to blot out. It is a truth too clearly manifest in the constitution of things, too deeply graven on the consciences of men. The spotless excellence of Jesus needs no vindication against criticism of this nature.

Were it possible to believe, that, apart from the blinding, misleading influence of a perverse character, so monstrous an idea respecting himself—supposing it to be false—gained a lodgement in the mind of Jesus, the effect must have been a steady, rapid moral deterioration. False pretensions, the exaggeration of

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xiv. 26; Matt. xix. 29.

<sup>3</sup> John xix. 26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xx. 15.

<sup>5</sup> See Renan, *English Conferences*, and *passim*.

personal claims, even when there is no deliberate insincerity in the assertion of them, distort the perceptions. They engender pride and other unhealthy passions. The career of Mohammed from the time when he set up to be a prophet illustrates the downward course of one whose soul is possessed by a false persuasion of this sort. When the bounds that limit the rank and rights of an individual in relation to his fellow-men are broken through, degeneracy of character follows. His head is turned. He seeks to hold a sceptre that is unlawfully grasped, to exercise a prerogative to which his powers are not equal. Simplicity of feeling, self-restraint, respect for the equal rights of others, genuine fear of God, gradually die out.

If it be supposed that Jesus, as the result of morbid enthusiasm, imagined himself the representative of God and the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, experience would have dispelled so vain a dream. It might, perhaps, have been kept alive in the first flush of apparent, transient success. But defeat, failure, desertion by supporters, will often awaken distrust, even in a cause which is true and just. How would it have been with the professed Messiah when the leaders in Church and State poured derision on his claims? How would it have been when his own neighbors, among whom he had grown up, chased him from the town? how when the people who had flocked after him for a while, turned away in disbelief, when his own disciples betrayed or denied him, when ruin and disgrace were heaped upon his cause, when he was brought face to face with death? How would he have felt when the crown of thorns was placed on his head? when, in mockery, a gorgeous robe was put on him? What an ordeal to pass through was that! Would the dream of enthusiasm have survived all this? Would not this high-wrought self-confidence have collapsed? Savonarola, when he stood in the pulpit of St. Mark's, with the eager multitude before him, and was excited by his own eloquence, seemed to himself to foresee, and ventured to foretell, specific events. But in the coolness and calm of his cell he had doubts about the reality of his own power of prediction. Hence, when tortured on the rack, he could not conscientiously affirm that his prophetic utterances were inspired of God. He might think so at certain moments; but there came the ordeal of sober reflection, there came the ordeal of suffering; and under this trial his own faith in himself was to this extent dissipated.

The depth and sincerity of the conviction which Jesus entertained respecting himself endured a test even more severe than that of an ignominious failure, and the pains of the cross. He saw clearly that he was putting others in mortal jeopardy.<sup>1</sup> The same ostracism, scorn, and malice awaited those who had attached themselves to his person, and were prominently identified with his cause. Their families would cast them off; the rulers of Church and State would harass them without pity; to kill them would be counted a service rendered to God. A man must be in his heart of hearts persuaded of the justice of a cause before he can make up his mind to die for it; but, if he have a spark of right feeling in him, he must be convinced in his inmost soul before he consents to involve the innocent and trustful follower in the destruction which he sees to be coming on himself. It must not be forgotten, that, from the beginning of the public life of Jesus to his last breath, the question of the reality of his pretensions was definitely before him. He could not escape from it for a moment. It was thrust upon him at every turn. The question was, should men *believe in him*. The strength of his belief in himself was continually tested. It was a subject of debate with disbelievers. On one occasion — the historical reality of the occurrence no one doubts — he called together his disciples, and inquired of them what idea was entertained respecting him by the people.<sup>2</sup> He heard their answer. Then he questioned them concerning their own conviction on this subject. One feels that his mood could not be more calm, more deliberate. The declaration of faith by Peter he pronounces to be a rock. It is an immovable foundation, on which he will erect an indestructible community. If Jesus persevered in the assertion of a groundless pretension, it was not for the reason that it was unchallenged. It was not cherished because nobody was anxious to disprove it or few inclined to dispute it. He was not led to maintain it from want of reflection.

The foregoing considerations, it is believed, are sufficient to show that the abiding conviction in the mind of Jesus respecting his own mission and authority is inexplicable, except on the supposition of its truth. There was no moral evil to cloud his self-discernment. The bias of no selfish impulse warped his estimate

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 17, 18, 36; Mark x. 39; John xvi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 13-21.



of himself. His conviction respecting his calling and office remained unshaken under the severest trials.

II. The sinlessness of Jesus *in its probative force* is equivalent to a miracle; it establishes his supernatural mission; it proves his exceptional relation to God.

We are now to contemplate the perfect holiness of Jesus from another point of view, as a proof on a level with miraculous events, and as thus directly attesting his claims, or the validity of his consciousness of a unique, immediate connection with God.

Sin is the disharmony of the will with the law of universal love. This law is one in its essence, but branches out in two directions,—as love supreme to God, and equal or impartial love to men. We have no call in this place to investigate the origin of sin. It is the universality of sin in the world of mankind which is the postulate of the argument. Sin varies indefinitely in kind and degree. But sinfulness in its generic character is an attribute of the human family. A human being old enough to be conscious of the distinction of right and wrong in whom no distinct fault of a moral nature is plainly discernible is rarely to be found. There may be here and there a person whose days have been spent in the seclusion of domestic life, under Christian influences, without any such explicit manifestation of evil as arrests attention and calls for censure. Occasionally there is a man in whom, even though he mingles in the active work of life, his associates find nothing to blame. But, in these extremely infrequent instances of lives without any apparent blemish, the individuals themselves who are thus remarkable are the last to consent to the favorable verdict. That sensitiveness of conscience which accompanies pure character recognizes and deplors the presence of sin. If there are not positive offences, there are defects; things are left undone which ought to be done. If there are no definite habits of feeling to be condemned, there is a conscious lack of a due energy of holy principle. In those who are deemed, and justly deemed, the most virtuous, and in whom there is no tendency to morbid self-depreciation, there are deep feelings of penitence. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”<sup>1</sup> This is quoted here, not as being an authoritative testimony, but as the utterance of one whose standard of character was obviously

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 8.

the highest. With such an ideal of human perfection, the very thought that any man should consider himself sinless excites indignation. One who pronounces himself blameless before God proves that falsehood, and not truth, governs his judgment.

What shall be said, then, if there be One of whom it can truly be affirmed, that every motive of his heart, not less than every overt action, was fully conformed to the loftiest ideal of excellence, — One in whom there was never the faintest self-condemnation, or the least ground for such an emotion? There is a miracle; not, indeed, on the same plane as miracles which interrupt the customary sequences of natural law. It is an event in another order of things than the material sphere. But it is equally an exception to human experience. It is equally to all who discern the fact a proclamation of the immediate presence of God. It is equally an attestation that he who is thus marked out in distinction from all other members of the race bears a divine commission. There is an exception to the uniform course of things. Such a phenomenon occasions no less wonder than the instantaneous cure, by a word, of a man born blind.

On this eminence he stands who called himself the Son of man. It is not claimed that this peculiarity of perfect holiness proves of itself the divinity of Jesus. This would be a larger conclusion than the premises justify. But the inference is unavoidable, first, that his relation to God is altogether peculiar, and secondly, that his testimony respecting himself has an attestation akin to that of a miracle. That testimony must be on all hands allowed to have included the claim to be the authoritative Guide and the Saviour of mankind; to be the Son of God in such a sense as to include the truth, and not this truth alone, that "none but the Father knoweth the Son; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 27.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MIRACLES : THEIR NATURE, CREDIBILITY, AND PLACE IN CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

CHRISTIANITY from the first has been declared to have a supernatural origin and sanction.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that the apostles denied that the religion which they were promulgating was the work of man, or that its distinctive worth was owing to created causes or agents. That Jesus preceded them in this declaration is equally certain. At the same time, the prior revelation of God in Nature and Providence was not ignored or lightly esteemed. Its comparative failure to produce its legitimate effect was attributed to the power of evil to dull the sense of the supernatural. Yet the discontent, self-accusation, and vague yearning for a lost birthright, which move men to hearken to the Christian revelation, are attributed to the influence of the earlier revelation in the material creation and in conscience.

Nor is there any inconsistency between the two revelations. Christianity is in part a republication of truth respecting God and human duties — truth which the light of Nature, were reason not clouded, would of itself disclose. Virtues of character which have shed lustre on individuals or communities that have had no knowledge of Christianity, correspond in no small degree to the precepts of Christianity. The difference, as already pointed out, is that in Christian teaching such duties are ingrafted on new motives, are connected with more potent incentives, and come home to the heart and conscience with a force of appeal not felt

<sup>1</sup> The term "supernatural" is used here, and occasionally elsewhere on these pages, as a matter of convenience, despite the fact that erroneous ideas are liable to be associated with it. The term serves to distinguish what it is used to denote from the customary sequences of physical and mental phenomena collectively considered, but not as implying that these are not equally in their origin, supernatural, *i.e.* produced by the will and power of God. Strictly speaking, the "natural" is "supernatural," and *vice versa*.

before. But the chief end of Christianity lies beyond that which it has in common with natural religion. The purpose is to bring men into a state of reconciliation and filial connection with God, and to plant on the earth a kingdom of righteousness and peace. For such an achievement more is needed than communications of abstract truth. The events which form the groundwork of Christianity are such as to awaken a living perception of the character of God and to impress the soul with a sense of his personal presence and agency. The doctrinal part of the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament is a growth upon an underlying foundation of facts. Doctrine illuminates that history wherein, from age to age, the just and merciful God had manifested himself to men.

When this view is taken of the Gospel, it no longer wears the appearance of being an afterthought of the Creator. Revelation is inwoven with phenomena which form an integral part of the history of mankind. That history is a connected whole. As such, Christianity is the realization of an eternal purpose. In this light it is regarded by the writers of the New Testament. To be sure, inasmuch as sin is no part of the creation, but is the perverse act of the creature, and since the consequences of sin in the natural order are thus brought in, it may be said with truth that redemption is the remedy of a disorder. It may be truly affirmed that Revelation, in the forms which it actually assumed, is made possible and necessary by the infraction of an ideal order. Only in this sense can it be called a provision for an emergency. It was, however, none the less preordained. It entered into the original plan of human history, conditioned, as features of that plan were, on the foreseen fact of sin. The Christian believer finds in the purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ the key to the understanding of history in its entire compass.

The historical account of the facts at the basis of the Christian Revelation contains in it records of miracles. In the last century the design of the miracles of the Gospel was commonly considered to be to furnish Christ and the apostles with "credentials" in proof of a divine commission to teach. This purpose of the miracles is not destitute of a sanction in the New Testament Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> But it is not at all a full description of their function.

<sup>1</sup> "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin." John xv. 24. The "works" included the miracles.

Generally speaking, they are not to be considered appendages, but rather constituent elements of Revelation. The miracles of healing, especially, which were wrought by Christ, were prompted by his desire to relieve suffering. The immediate motive was pity for human distress. But these were not wrought upon people in a mass, but on individuals, not sought out for the purpose of curing their physical disorders. To confer this blessing was not the chief end in view. It was subsidiary to the chief purpose, which was to impart a spiritual healing. Hence they were done in a way to indicate that they were but an element in the self-manifestation of Christ.

They were to rekindle a dormant faith. They were adapted to reënforce a faith that was weak. They were tokens of the supernatural. They were, moreover, symbols of the spiritual energy to go forth from the Saviour's person and work for the redemption of the world. The sign-seeking temper, the unspiritual appetite for marvels for their own sake, the disposition to see nowhere, except in displays of power, evidence of God's presence and of his own mission from God, the demand for an astounding sign from heaven, Jesus rebuked. But this is all. "The Jesus Christ presented to us in the New Testament would become a very different person if the miracles were removed."<sup>1</sup> "The character of Jesus," to quote the words of Horace Bushnell, "is ever shining with and through them, in clear self-evidence, leaving them never to stand as raw wonders only of might, but covering them with glory, as tokens of a heavenly love, and acts that only suit the proportions of his personal greatness and majesty."<sup>2</sup>

Before considering the subject of the credibility of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, something should be said on the question whether or not miracles are possible. Denial or doubt on this last point results from an untheistic conception of Nature, and the relation of Nature to God. Or, if the personality of God is recognized, he is conceived of as exterior to the world, either a passive spectator or acting upon it from without. The notion of Nature is that of a machine, having its springs of motion within itself — a closed aggregate of forces which operates in a mechanical way. It is inferred that a miracle, were it to occur, would be an irruption into this complex mechanism. Such has been the idea

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Temple (Archbishop of Canterbury), *The Relations between Religion and Science*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 364.



of Deism, and something like it has too often been implied in the language of Christian theologians. When it is understood that God, transcendent and personal though he be, is likewise immanent in Nature, and that Nature and the interaction of its parts are dependent on his unceasing energy, the difficulty vanishes. Science, no more than religion, warrants us in assuming the existence of "forces" in Nature, which form an independent totality. In fact, the drift of science is toward the unification of "forces." "The whole course of Nature," says Lotze, "becomes intelligible only by supposing the coworking (*Mitwirkung*) of God, who alone carries forward (*vermittelt*) the reciprocal action of the different parts of the world. But that view which admits a life of God that is not benumbed in an unchangeable sameness, will be able to understand his eternal coworking as a variable quantity, the transforming influence of which comes forth (*hervortritt*) at particular moments and attests that the course of Nature is not shut up within itself. And this being the case, the complete conditioning causes of the miracle will be found in God and Nature together, and in that eternal action and reaction between them, which although perhaps not ordered simply according to general laws, is not void of regulative principles. This vital, as opposed to a mechanical, constitution of Nature, together with the conception of Nature as not complete in itself—as if it were dis severed from the divine energy—shows how a miracle may take place without any disturbance elsewhere of the constancy of Nature, all whose forces are affected sympathetically, with the consequence that its orderly movement goes on unhindered."<sup>1</sup>

Much that has been written, in recent decades, under the name of natural "science" contains in it an admixture of metaphysics which belongs, if it could claim a foothold anywhere, to philosophy and not to natural or physical science as such. Hence it cannot plead the authority conceded to those who teach science properly so called. What is meant by "Nature"? what is matter? what is "force"? what does the term "law," and the phrase "laws of Nature," signify? We enter here into no prolonged investigation

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 4th ed., vol. iii. p. 364. The principle of the conservation of energy has nothing to say of the sum of energy in the universe, or whether there be an unalterable sum. It is, in its proper limits, an hypothesis, or best working postulate at present. See Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, ii. lecture vi.

of these topics, but it is necessary to remind the reader of the trend of the psychical sciences at present, which is due largely to the impulse first given by Berkeley, and to the influence of Kant and Hegel. Not that the conception of matter which is coming into vogue is that of a purely subjective idealism under which the percepts of sense have no existence save in the human mind, but it is rather that of an objective idealism. The "things of sense" are to human apprehension real as phenomena, and—whether finite minds existed or not—are real as the expression of the ideas and the will of God. If it be settled, or if it ever should be, that matter is just what the atomic theory describes, then it is the atomic world that constitutes the phenomena which are the objects of sense-perception. Space, as well as spatial phenomena, is itself phenomenal. There is no ground for saying that an inherent bond of necessity determines the action of the atoms. This, however, is not to make Nature naught but "an aggregate of Divine volitions."<sup>1</sup>

"The natural history of the material world is truly a history of natural antecedents which are metaphorically called *agents*. They are to us only *signs* of their so-called effects. . . . Sensible signs, not operative causes, make up the visible world. Nature is a divine sense-symbolism adapted to the use of man. Without natural causes there could be no humanly calculable, and more or less controllable, course of events. But if really to explain an event be to assign its origin and final cause, natural science never explains anything; its province is only to discover the divinely established custom followed in the natural succession." "*After* God has been found in the moral experience of man, which points irresistibly to intending Will, as the only known Cause which is unconditional or originating, the discovery that *this* is the natural or provisional cause of *that* is recognized as the discovery that *this* is the divinely constituted sign, or constant antecedent of *that*. The whole natural succession is then recognized as a manifestation of Personal agency."<sup>2</sup>

These views render it easy to point out the relation of miracles to the observed constancy of Nature. Were the vision not clouded, the ordinary sequences of Nature, its wise and beneficent order, would manifest its Author, and call out faith and adoration. The unexpected departure of Nature from its beaten path serves to impress on the minds of men the half-forgotten fact that insepa-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 10.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, 2d ed., pp. 131, 193.

able from the "forces" of Nature, even in its ordinary movement, is the will of God. What are "natural laws"? They are not causes. They exert no power. They are not a code superimposed upon natural objects. They are simply a generalized statement of the way in which the objects of Nature are observed to act and interact. Thus the miracle does not clash with natural laws. It is a modification in the effect due to unusual exertion of the voluntary agency which is its cause. If there is a new phenomenon, it is the natural consequence of this variation. There is no violation of the law of gravitation when a stone is thrown into the air. Nature is, within limits, subject to the *human* will. The intervention of man's will gives being to phenomena which no qualities of matter, independently of the human agent, would ever produce. Yet such effects following upon volition are not said to be violations of law. Law describes the action of things in nature when that action is not modified and controlled by the voluntary agency back of it. If the efficiency of the divine will infinitely outstrips that of the will of man, still miracles are as really consistent with natural laws as the lifting of a man's hand under the impulse of a volition. This obvious fact, it may be added, disproves the statement sometimes heard, that a miracle in any one place would destroy the order of Nature everywhere.

If the *possibility* of miracles is discerned, the next point to be settled is that of their *credibility*. The question whether the miracles described in the New Testament, by which it is alleged that Christianity was ushered into the world, actually occurred, is to be settled by an examination of the evidence. It is an historical question, and is to be determined by an application of the canons applicable to historical inquiry. The great sceptical philosopher of the last century displayed his ingenuity in an attempt to show that a miracle is from its very nature, and therefore under all circumstances, incapable of proof. Hume founds our belief in testimony solely on experience. "The reason," he says, "why we place any credit in witnesses and historians is not derived from any *connection* which we perceive *a priori* between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them." This is far from being a full account of the origin of our belief in testimony. Custom is not the primary source of credence. The truth is, that we instinctively give credit to what is told us; that is, we assume that the facts accord with testimony.

Experience, to be sure, serves to modify this natural expectation, and we learn to give or withhold credence according to circumstances. The circumstance which determines us to believe or disbelieve is our conviction respecting the capacity of the witness for ascertaining the truth on the subject of his narration and respecting his honesty. If we are convinced that he could not have been deceived, and that he is truthful, we believe his story. No doubt one thing which helps to determine his title to credit is the probability or improbability of the occurrences related. The circumstance that such occurrences have never taken place before, or are "contrary to experience" in Hume's sense of the phrase, does not of necessity destroy the credibility of testimony to them. An event is not rendered incapable of proof because it occurs, if it occurs at all, for the first time. Unless it can be shown to be impossible, or incredible on some other account than because it is an unexampled event, it may be capable of being proved by witnesses. Hume is not justified in assuming that miracles are "contrary to experience," as he defines this term. This is the very question in dispute. The evidence for the affirmative, as J. S. Mill has correctly stated, is diminished in force by whatever weight belongs to the evidence that certain miracles have taken place. The gist of Hume's argumentation is contained in this remark, "Let us suppose that the fact which they [the witnesses] affirm, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; and suppose, also, that the testimony, considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof: in that case, there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail," etc. At the best, according to Hume, in every instance where a miracle is alleged, proof balances proof. One flaw in this argument has just been pointed out. The fundamental fallacy of this reasoning is in the premises, which base belief on naked "experience" divorced from all rational expectations drawn from any other source. The argument proceeds on the assumption that a miracle is just as likely to occur in one place as in another; that a miracle whereby the marks of truthfulness are transformed into a mask of error and falsehood is as likely to occur as (for example) the healing of a blind man by a touch of the hand. This might be so if the Power that governs the world were destitute of moral attributes. "The question is whether the presumption against miracles as mere physical phenomena is rebutted by the presumption in favor of



miracles as works of infinite benevolence." Hume's argument is valid only on the theory of Atheism.

Huxley objects to Hume's definition of a miracle as a violation of the order of Nature, "because all we know of the order of Nature is derived from our observation of the course of events of which the so-called miracle is a part."<sup>1</sup> The laws of Nature, he adds, "are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only as grounds of a more or less justifiable expectation." He reduces Hume's doctrine, so far as it is tenable, to the canon,—"the more a statement of fact conflicts with previous experience, the more complete must be the evidence which is to justify us in believing it." By "more complete" evidence he apparently means evidence greater in amount, and tested by a more searching scrutiny. One of the examples which is given is the alleged existence of a centaur. The possibility of a centaur, Huxley is far from denying, contrary as the existence of such an animal would be to those "generalizations of our present experience which we are pleased to call the laws of Nature." Huxley does not deny that such events as the conversion of water into wine, and the raising of a dead man to life, are within the limits of possibility. Being, for aught we can say, possible, we can conceive evidence to exist of such an amount and character as to place them beyond reasonable doubt. Wherein is Huxley's position on this question faulty? He is right in requiring that no link shall be wanting in the chain of proof. He is right in demanding that a *mere* "coincidence" shall not be taken for an efficacious exertion of power. It is certainly possible that a man apparently dead should awake simultaneously with a command to arise. If the person who uttered the command knew that the death was only apparent, the awakening would be easily explained. If he did not know it, and if the sleep were a swoon where the sense of hearing is suspended, it is still *possible* that the recovery of consciousness might occur at the moment when the injunction to arise was spoken. To be sure, it would be a startling coincidence; yet it might be nothing more. But, if there were sufficient reason to conclude that the man had passed the limit of possible resuscitation by unaided human power, then his awakening at the command of another does not admit of being explained by natural causes. The conjunction of the return of life and the direction to awake cannot be considered

<sup>1</sup> Huxley's *Hume*, p. 131.



a mere coincidence. If other events of the same character take place, where the moral honesty of all the persons concerned, and other circumstances, exclude mistake as to the facts, the proof of miracles is complete and overwhelming. Canon Mozley says : —

"The evidential function of a miracle is based upon the common argument of design as proved by coincidence. The greatest marvel or interruption of the order of nature occurring by itself, as the very consequence of being connected with nothing, proves nothing. But, if it takes place in connection with the word or act of a person, that coincidence proves design in the marvel, and makes it a miracle; and, if that person professes to report a message or revelation from Heaven, the coincidence again of the miracle with the professed message of God proves design on the part of God to warrant and authorize the message."<sup>1</sup>

There is another particular in which Huxley is in error. It is plain that if events of the kind referred to, which cannot be due to mere coincidence, occur, they call for no revisal of our conception of "the order of Nature," if by this is meant the operation of so-called "forces," which are ordinarily in exercise within it. Such phenomena, it is obvious, might occur as would render the materialistic explanation quite irrational. The work done might so far surpass the power of its physical antecedents that the ascription of it to a purely material agency would be absurd. On the supposition that an occult material agency hitherto undiscovered were tenable, we should be driven to the conclusion that the person who had become aware of it, and was thus able to give the signal for the occurrence of the phenomena, was possessed of supernatural knowledge; and then we should have, if not a miracle of power, a miracle of knowledge. The answer to Huxley, then, is, that the circumstances of an alleged miracle may be such as to exclude the supposition either that there is a remarkable coincidence merely, or that the order of Nature—the natural system—is in itself different from what has been previously observed. The circumstances may be such that the only reasonable conclusion is the hypothesis of an unusual exertion of divine energy, constantly immanent.

Huxley, like Hume, treats the miracle as an isolated event. He looks at it exclusively from the point of view of a naturalist, as if material nature were dis severed from God and were the sum of all being and the

<sup>1</sup> *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 5, 6.

repository of all force. He shuts his eyes to all evidence in its favor which it may be possible to derive from its ostensible design and use and from the circumstances surrounding it. He shuts his eyes to the truth, even to the possible truth, of the being of God. Like Hume, he contemplates the miracle as a naked marvel. He confines his attention to a single quality of the event—its confessed extremely *unusual* character. An analogous mode of regarding historical occurrences would give an air of improbability to innumerable events that are well known to have taken place. If we are told that the enlightened rulers of a nation on a certain day deliberately set fire to their capital, and consumed its palaces and treasures in the flames, the narrative would excite the utmost surprise, if not incredulity. But incredulity vanishes, were it added that the capital was Moscow, and that it was held by an invading army which certain Russians were willing to make every sacrifice to destroy. Extraordinary actions, whether beneficent or destructive, may fail to obtain, or even to deserve, credence, until the motives of the actors, and the occasions that led to them, are brought to light. The fact of the Moscow fire is not disproved by showing that it could not have kindled itself. The method of spontaneous combustion is not the only possible method of accounting for such an event. Yet this assumption fairly describes Huxley's philosophy on the subject before us.

Ignoring supernatural agency altogether, Huxley is obliged to ascribe miracles, on the supposition that they occur, exclusively, to things in Nature, and thus to make them at variance with the order of Nature as at present understood. They are events parallel to the discovery of a monstrosity like a centaur. This is an entirely gratuitous supposition. A miracle does not disturb our conception of the system of Nature. On the contrary, if there were not an ordinary sequence of natural phenomena, there could not be a miracle, or, rather, all phenomena would be alike miraculous. And the pliability of Nature is involved in its relation to God.<sup>1</sup>

The "order of Nature" is an ambiguous phrase. It may mean that arrangement, or mutual interaction of parts, which constitutes the harmony of Nature. The "order of Nature," in the sense of "harmony," as Mozley observes, "is not disturbed by a miracle."<sup>2</sup> The interruption of a train of relations, in one instance, leaves them standing in every other; *i.e.* leaves the system, as such, untouched."<sup>3</sup> To this it may be added that a miracle is not in-harmonious with the comprehensive system which is established and maintained by the Author of Nature, and in which "Nature" is but a single department.

<sup>1</sup> On Huxley's philosophy, see Appendix, Note II.

<sup>2</sup> *Bampton Lectures*, p. 43. See Lotze's remarks above, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 168.

By the "order of Nature" — let it be repeated — is signified the stated manner of the recurrence of physical phenomena. On this order rests the expectation that things will be in the future as they have been in the past, and the belief that they have been as they now are. This belief and expectation do not partake in the least of the character of necessary truth. The habitual expectation that the "order of Nature," embracing the sequences of phenomena which usually pass under our observation, will be subject to no interruption in the future, is capable of being reversed whenever proof is furnished to the contrary. The same is true as to the course of things in the past. The principles of Theism acquaint us with the Cause which is adequate to produce such an interruption. The moral condition and exigencies of mankind may furnish a sufficient motive for the exertion of this power by the merciful Being to whom it belongs. The characteristics of Christianity, considered apart from the alleged miracles connected with it, predispose the mind to give credit to the testimony on which these miracles rest.

We can hardly expect to understand fully the nature of the miracle-working power of Christ, the exercise of such a power being foreign to our own experience. It may be that in some cases the apparent disturbance of the ordinary course of Nature was due to a higher physical law. The miracle would then consist in the knowledge of this law on the part of Christ, and in the coincidence of time with the purpose it served in connection with him.<sup>1</sup> In certain instances effects were wrought by Jesus by the force of his personality, a force not without analogies within our own observation, which, however, fall too far short of the capacity evinced by Jesus, in reference to nervous maladies, to be identified with it. In one instance he is said to have been conscious that "virtue" had gone out of him. Generally speaking, faith is at least a moral prerequisite in the reception of the miraculous benefit. It is well to remember that in regard to all the circumstances of miracles, the impressions and comments of bystanders are not to be considered infallible and taken literally. For example, it need not be supposed that dissolution of body and spirit had gone so far in Lazarus that the soul had entered on a separate, conscious life. Some there are who give full credence to miracles wrought upon men, and this in respect to the healing of maladies otherwise incurable, but hesitate to accept as literal history the

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion, with a wide application of it to the Gospel narratives, is made by Dr. Temple, now Archbishop of Canterbury, in *The Relations of Religion and Science*, pp. 194 seq.

accounts of such miracles in Nature as the multiplying of the loaves.<sup>1</sup> One theory is that the occurrences at the basis of these narrations were signal acts of Providence (not supernatural), as to which Jesus at the moment was inspired with the conviction that they would occur—a feeling which, so to speak, he ventured upon. To those about him it seemed in the retrospect that they were external miracles. Opposed to this theory is the fact that the multiplying of the loaves stands recorded in all the Gospels. So in all of them are narrated instances of each of the species of miracles wrought upon Nature. The supposition that a few of the miracles are symbolical—like parables, a *quasi*-pictorial representation of spiritual truths—cannot appeal for support to the example of the record of the temptation of Jesus. In this last case, the essential fact depicted in the record is one of which the apostles could have no personal cognizance.

The relation of miracles to the external proof of divine revelation merits more particular attention. It has been already remarked that in the last century it was the evidence from miracles which the defenders of Christianity principally relied on. The work of Paley is constructed on this basis. The argument for miracles is placed by him in the foreground; the testimony in behalf of them is set forth with admirable clearness and vigor, and objections are parried with much skill. To the internal evidence is assigned a subordinate place. This whole method of presenting the case has excited in later times misgivings and open dissent. Coleridge may be mentioned as one of its earliest censors. The contents of Christianity as a system of truth, and the transcendent excellence of Christ, have been considered the main evidence of the supernatural origin of the Gospel.<sup>2</sup> The old method has not been without conspicuous representatives, of whom the late Canon Mozley is one of the most notable. But, on the whole, it is upon the internal argument, in its various branches, that the principal stress has been laid, in recent days, in the conflict with doubt and disbelief. In Germany, Schleiermacher, whose profound appreciation of the character of Jesus is the keynote in his system, held that a belief in miracles is not directly involved in the faith of a Christian, although the denial of miracles is evidently destructive,

<sup>1</sup> Among the writers of this class are Beyschlag, *Das Leben Jesu*, i. 303 *seq.*; Weiss, *Leben Jesu*; Bleek, *Synoptische Erklärung d. drei ersten Evangelien*.

<sup>2</sup> In the O. T. (Deut. xiii. 1-6) is a command not to accept a prophet's teaching, if it be impious, even if it be sanctioned by signs and wonders, but to put him to death.



as implying such a distrust of the capacity or integrity of the apostles as would invalidate all their testimony respecting Christ, and thus prevent us from gaining an authentic impression of his person and character.<sup>1</sup> Rothe, who was a firm believer in the miracles, as actual historical occurrences, nevertheless maintains that the acceptance of them is not indispensable to the attainment of the benefits of the Gospel. They were, in point of fact, he tells us, essential to the introduction of Christianity into the world: the rejection of them is unphilosophical, and contrary to the conclusion warranted by historical evidence. But now that Christ is known, and Christianity is introduced as a working power into history, it is possible for those who doubt about the miracles to receive him in faith, and through him to enter into communion with God.<sup>2</sup>

There can be no question, that, at the present day, minds which are disquieted by doubt, or are more or less disinclined to believe in revelation, should first give heed to the internal evidence. It is not by witnesses to miracles, even if they stood before us, that scepticism is overcome, where there is a lack of any living discernment of the peculiarity of the Gospel and of the perfection of its author. How can a greater effect be expected from miracles alleged to have taken place at a remote date, be the proofs what they may, than these miracles produced upon those in whose presence they were wrought? Those who undervalue the internal evidence, and place their reliance on the argument from miracles, forget the declaration of Christ himself, that there are moods of disbelief which the resurrection of a man from the dead, when witnessed by themselves, would not dispel. They forget the posture of mind of many who had the highest possible proof of an external nature that miracles were done by him and by the apostles. Moreover, they fail to consider, that, for the establishment of miracles as matters of fact, something more is required than a scrutiny such as would suffice for the proof of ordinary occurrences. It is manifest that all those characteristics of Christ and of Christianity which predispose us to attribute it to a miraculous origin are of weight as proof of the particular miracles said to have taken place in connection with it.

At the same time, miracles, and the proof of miracles from testimony, cannot be spared. When the peculiarities which distin-

<sup>1</sup> *Christl. Glaube*, vol. ii. p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Zur Dogmatik*, p. III.



guished Christianity from all other religions have impressed the mind, when the character of Christ in its unique and supernal quality has risen before us in its full attractive power, and when, from these influences, we are almost persuaded, at least not a little inclined, to believe in the Gospel as a revelation of God, we spontaneously crave some attestation of an objective character. We naturally expect, that, if all this be really upon a plane above Nature, there will be some explicit sign and confirmation of the fact. Such attestation being wanting, the question recurs whether there may not be, after all, some occult power of Nature to which the moral phenomena of Christianity might be traced. Can we be sure that we are not still among "second causes" alone, in contact with a human wisdom, which, however exalted, is still human, and not unmingled with error? Are we certain that we have not here merely a flower in the garden of Nature, — a flower, perhaps, of unmatched beauty and delicious fragrance, yet a product of the earth? It is just at this point that the record of miracles comes in to meet a rational expectation, to give their full effect to other considerations where the suspicion of a subjective bias may intrude, and to fortify a belief which needs a support of just this nature. The agency of God in connection with the origin of Christianity is manifested to the senses, as well as to the reason and the heart. Not simply a wisdom that is more than human, a virtue of which there is no parallel in human experience, a merciful, renovating influence not referable to any creed or philosophy of man's device, make their appeal to the sense of the supernatural and divine. Not disconnected from these supernatural tokens, but mingling with them, are manifestations of a power exceeding that of Nature — a power equally characteristic of God and identifying the Author of Nature with the Being of whom Christ is the messenger. Strip the manifestation of this ingredient of power, and an element is lacking for its full effect. The other parts of the manifestation excite a willingness to believe, a reasonable anticipation that the one missing element is associated with them. When this anticipation is verified by answering proof, the argument is complete. An inchoate faith rises into an assured confidence. It is true that, according to the Gospel histories, Jesus deprecated an appetite for displays of miraculous power. When the Pharisees challenged him to exhibit a peculiar, overpowering proof of his Messiahship, "a sign from heaven," he refused the

demand which they made, "tempting him," that is, asking something which they knew that he would refuse. The miracles which he had performed did not satisfy them.<sup>1</sup> There were other than miraculous signs of the presence of God and proofs that the Messiah had come, which it only needed a spiritual discernment to perceive. Except for the sake of relieving pain and sorrow, if he worked miracles, it was seemingly under a protest.

The importance of the evidence for miracles, then, does not rest solely on the ground, that, if it be discredited, the value of the apostles' testimony respecting other aspects of the life of Christ is seriously weakened. The several proofs need the miracles as a complement in order to give them full efficacy, and to remove a difficulty which otherwise stands in the way of the conviction which they tend to create. Miracles, it may also be affirmed, are component parts of that Gospel which is the object of belief. Not only are they parts, and not merely accessories, of the act of revelation, they are also comprehended within the work of deliverance through Christ — the redemption which is the object of the Christian faith. This is evidently true of his resurrection, in which his victory over sin was seen in its appropriate fruit, and his victory over death was realized — realized, as well as demonstrated to man.

In fine, miracles are the complement of the internal evidence. The two sorts of proof lend support each to the other, and they conspire together to satisfy the candid inquirer that Christianity is of supernatural origin.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 1; cf. Mark viii. 11 *seq.* See also Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. ii. pp. 221 *seq.*

## CHAPTER IX

### PROOF OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST INDEPENDENTLY OF SPECIAL INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS

THE reader will bear in mind that we propose to reason, for the present, on the basis of views respecting the origin of the Gospels which do not clash with those commonly accepted by critics of the sceptical schools. Let it be assumed that the traditions which are collected in the Gospels of the canon are of unequal value, and that all of these books were composed later than the dates in the established tradition. Still it is maintained that, even on this hypothesis, the essential facts which are related by the Evangelists, can be established. In this chapter it is proposed to bring forward evidence to prove that miracles were wrought by Jesus substantially as related by them.

I. The fact that the apostles themselves professed to work miracles and to do this by a power derived from Christ, makes it altogether probable that they believed miracles to have been wrought by him.

The point to be shown is, that narratives of miracles performed by Christ were embraced in the accounts which the apostles were in the habit of giving of his life. A presumptive proof of this proposition is drawn from the circumstance that they themselves, in fulfilling the office to which they were appointed by him, professed to work miracles, and considered this an indispensable criterion of their divine mission. There is no doubt of the fact as here stated. Few scholars now hold that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul. Some follow an ancient opinion, which Grotius held, and to which Calvin was inclined, that Luke wrote it. Others attribute it to Barnabas. Many are disposed, with Luther, to consider Apollos its author. It is a question which we have no occasion to discuss here. The date of the Epistle is the only point that concerns us at present. It was used by Clement of Rome in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and

therefore must have existed as early as A.D. 97. Zahn, one of the latest and most learned scholars who has discussed the question, places the date at about A.D. 80.<sup>1</sup> Harnack considers the probable date to be not far from 65.<sup>2</sup> Weiss places it before the year 70.<sup>3</sup> A large number of critics, including adherents of opposite creeds in theology, infer, from passages in the Epistle itself, that the temple at Jerusalem was still standing when it was written.<sup>4</sup> Hilgenfeld, the ablest representative of the Tübingen school, is of opinion that Apollos wrote it before A.D. 67.<sup>5</sup> Be this as it may, its author was well qualified to speak of the course pursued by the apostles in their ministry.<sup>6</sup> Now he tells us that their divine mission was confirmed by the miracles which they did: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."<sup>7</sup> The same thing is repeatedly asserted by the Apostle Paul. "Working miracles among you"<sup>8</sup> is the phrase which he uses when speaking of what he himself had done in Galatia. If we give to the preposition, as perhaps we should, its literal sense "in," the meaning is, that the apostle had imparted to his converts the power to work miracles.<sup>9</sup> In the Epistles to the Romans he explicitly refers to "the mighty signs and wonders" which Christ had wrought by him: it was by "deed," as well as by word, that he had succeeded in convincing a multitude of brethren.<sup>10</sup> How, indeed we might stop to ask, could such an effect have been produced at that time in the heathen world by "word" alone? But in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he reminds them that miracles — "signs and wonders and mighty deeds" — had been wrought by him before their eyes; and he calls them "the signs," not of *an* apostle, as the Authorized Version has it, but of "the apostle."<sup>11</sup> They are the credentials of the apostolic office. By these an apostle is known to be what he professes to be. In working miracles he had exhibited the characteristic marks of an apostle. The author of the book of Acts, then, goes no farther than Paul himself goes, when that author ascribes

<sup>1</sup> *Einl. in d. N. Test.*, vol. ii. s. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronologie*, vol. i. p. 718.

<sup>3</sup> *Einl. in d. N. Test.*, p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> See Heb. vii. 9, viii. 3, ix. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Einl. in d. N. Test.*, p. 388.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. ii. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, ver. 5.

<sup>8</sup> ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, Gal. iii. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lightfoot and Meyer, *ad loc.*

<sup>10</sup> Rom. xv. 18–20.

<sup>11</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 12.

to the apostles "many wonders and signs."<sup>1</sup> It is in the highest degree probable, in the light of the passages quoted from Paul, that, if he and Barnabas had occasion to vindicate themselves and their work, they would declare, as the author of Acts affirms they did, "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."<sup>2</sup> Now we advance another step. In each of the first three Gospels the direction to work miracles is a part of the brief commission given by Christ to the apostles.<sup>3</sup> If the apostles could remember anything correctly, would they forget the terms of this brief, momentous charge from the Master? This, if anything, would be handed down in an authentic form. In the charge when the apostles were first sent out, as it is given in Matthew, they were to confine their labors to the Jews—to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." They were not even to go at that time to the Samaritans. This injunction is a strong confirmation of the exactness of the report in the first Evangelist. Coupling the known fact, that the working of miracles was considered by the apostles a distinguishing sign of their office, with the united testimony of the first three Gospels,—the Gospels in which the appointment of the Twelve is recorded,—it may be safely concluded that Jesus did then tell them to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." He told them to preach, and to verify their authority as teachers by this merciful exertion of powers greater than belong to man. Is it probable that he expected them to furnish proofs of a kind which had not been furnished himself? Did he direct them to do what they had never seen him do? Did he profess to communicate to his apostles a power which he had given them no evidence of possessing?

II. Injunctions of Jesus not to report his miracles, it is evident, are truthfully imputed to him; and this proves that the events to which they relate actually took place.

It is frequently said in the Gospels, that Jesus enjoined upon those whom he miraculously healed not to make it publicly known.<sup>4</sup> He was anxious that the miracle should not be noised

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 43, cf. iv. 30, v. 12, xiv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xv. 12, cf. ver. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. x. 1, 8; Mark iii. 15; Luke ix. 2; cf. Luke x. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 30, xii. 16, xvii. 9; Mark iii. 12, v. 43, vii. 36, viii. 26, ix. 9; Luke v. 14, viii. 56.



abroad. For instance, it is said in Mark, that in the neighborhood of Bethsaida he sent home a blind man whom he had cured, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."<sup>1</sup> The motive is plainly indicated. Jesus had to guard against a popular uprising, than which nothing was easier to provoke among the inflammable inhabitants of Galilee. There were times, it costs no effort to believe, when they were eager to make him a king.<sup>2</sup> He had to conceal himself from the multitude. He had to withdraw into retired places. It was necessary for him to recast utterly the popular conception of the Messiah, and this was a slow and well-nigh impossible task. It was a political leader and ruler whom the people looked for. It was hard to educate even the disciples out of the old prepossession. Hence he used great reserve and caution in announcing himself as the Messiah. He made himself known by degrees. When Peter uttered his glowing confession of faith, Jesus charged him and his companions "that they should tell no man of him"; that is, they should keep to themselves their knowledge that he was the Christ.<sup>3</sup> The interdict against publishing abroad his miracles is therefore quite in keeping with a portion of the evangelic tradition that is indubitably authentic. On the other hand, such an interdict is a thing which it would occur to nobody to invent. It is the last thing which contrivers of miraculous tales (unless they had before them the model of the Gospels) would be likely to imagine. No plausible motive can be thought of for attributing falsely such injunctions to Jesus, unless it is assumed that there was a desire to account for the alleged miracles not being more widely known. But this would imply intentional falsehood in the first narrators, whoever they were. Even this supposition, in itself most unlikely, is completely excluded, because the prohibitions are generally said to have proved ineffectual. It is commonly added in the Gospels, that the individuals who were healed of their maladies did not heed them, but blazed abroad the fact of their miraculous cure. Since the injunctions imposing silence are authentic, the miracles, without which they are meaningless, must have been wrought. It is worthy of note, that, when the maniac of Gadara was restored to health, Jesus did not lay this commandment on him. He sent him to his home, bidding him tell his

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 26.<sup>2</sup> John vi. 15.<sup>3</sup> Mark viii. 30; Luke ix. 21.

friends of his experience of the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup> Connected with the narratives of miracles, both before and just after in the same chapter,<sup>2</sup> we find the usual charge not to tell what had been done. Why not in this instance of the madman of Gadara? The reason would seem to have been, that, in that region where Jesus had not taught, and where he did not purpose to remain, the same danger from publicity did not exist. To be sure, the man was not told "to publish" the miracle "in Decapolis," as he proceeded to do; but no pains were taken to prevent him from doing this. He was left at liberty to act in this respect as he pleased. The Evangelist does not call our attention in any way to this peculiarity of the Gadara miracle. It is thus an undesigned confirmation of the truth of the narrative, and at the same time of the other narratives with which the injunction to observe silence is connected.

III. Cautions, plainly authentic, against an excessive esteem of miracles, are a proof that they were actually wrought.

No one who falsely sets up to be a miracle-worker seeks to lower the popular esteem of miracles. Such a one never chides the wonder-loving spirit. The same is equally true of those who imagine or otherwise fabricate stories of miracles. The moods of mind out of which fictions of this kind are hatched are incompatible with anything like a disparagement of miracles. The tendency will be to make as much of them as possible. Now, the Gospel records represent Christ as taking the opposite course, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."<sup>3</sup> This implies that there were higher grounds of faith. It is an expression of blame. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."<sup>4</sup> That is, if you cannot take my word for it, then let the miracles convince you. Under the designation "works," miraculous works must have been included.<sup>5</sup> It would almost seem, as already remarked, that Christ performed his miracles under a protest, save as they were called for in order to relieve or to console the suffering. He refused to do a miracle where there was not a germ of faith beforehand. In the first three Gospels there is the same relative estimate of miracles as in the fourth. If men form

<sup>1</sup> Mark v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 12, v. 43.

<sup>3</sup> John iv. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv. 11.

<sup>5</sup> As in Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.

an opinion about the weather by the looks of the sky, they ought to be convinced by "the signs of the times," in which, if the miracles are comprised, it is only as one element in the collective manifestation of Christ.<sup>1</sup> When the seventy disciples returned full of joy that they had not only been able to heal the sick, but also to deliver demoniacs from their distress,<sup>2</sup> — which had not been explicitly promised them when they went forth, — Jesus sympathized with their joy. He beheld before his mind's eye the swift downfall of the dominating spirit of evil, and he assured the disciples that further miraculous power should be given to them. But he added, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." They were not to plume themselves on the supernatural power exercised, or to be exercised, by them. They were not to make it a ground of self-congratulation. These statements of Jesus, be it observed, for the reasons stated above, verify themselves as authentic. And they presuppose the reality of the miracles. They show, it may be added, that the disciples were trained by Jesus not to indulge a wonder-loving spirit, and thus guarded against this source of self-deception.

IV. Teaching of Jesus which is evidently genuine is inseparable from certain miracles; in other words, the miracles cannot be dissected out of authentic teaching and incidents with which they are connected in the narrative. A few illustrations will prove this to be the case.

1. John the Baptist, being then in prison, sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was indeed the Messiah.<sup>3</sup> A doubt had sprung up in his mind. This is an incident which nobody would have invented. In proof of this, it is enough to say that an effort has been made, by commentators who have caught up a suggestion of Origen, to explain away the fact. It has been conjectured that the message was probably to satisfy some of John's sceptical disciples. There is not a syllable in the narrative to countenance this view. It is excluded by the message which the disciples were to carry from Christ to John, "Blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me." That is, blessed is the man

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the force of the *καὶ* (in the *καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια*, etc.), Luke x. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xi. 4; Luke vii. 22.

who is not led to disbelieve because the course that I take does not answer to his ideal of the Messiah. There is no reason to think that John's mind was free from those more or less sensuous anticipations concerning Christ and his kingdom which the apostles, even after they had long been with Jesus, had not shaken off. He had foretold that the Messiah was to have a "fan in his hand," was to "gather his wheat into the garner," and to "burn up the chaff."<sup>1</sup> He was perplexed that Jesus took no more decisive step, that no great overturning had come. Was Jesus, after all, the Messiah himself, or was he a precursor? If, in his prison there, the faith of John for the moment faltered, it was nothing worse than was true of Moses and Elijah, the greatest of the old prophets. The commendation of John which Jesus uttered in the hearing of the bystanders, immediately after he had sent back the disciples, was probably designed to efface any impression unfavorable to the Baptist which might have been left on their minds. This eulogy is another corroboration of the truth of the narrative. The same is true of his closing words, "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." They suggest the limit of John's insight into the nature of the kingdom. It is an unquestionable fact, therefore, that the inquiry was sent by John. Nor can it be denied that Jesus returned the following answer, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." The messengers were to describe to John the miracles which Jesus was doing, — Luke expressly adds that they themselves were witnesses of them, — and to assure him, that in addition to these signs of the Messianic era which Isaiah had predicted,<sup>2</sup> to the poor the good news of the speedy advent of the kingdom were proclaimed. The message of Jesus had no ambiguity. It meant what the Evangelists understood it to mean. The idea that he was merely using symbols to denote the spiritual effect of his preaching is a mere subterfuge of interpreters who cannot otherwise avoid the necessity of admitting the fact of miracles. What sort of satisfaction would it have given John, in the state of mind in which he then was, to be assured simply that the teaching of Jesus was causing great pleasure, and doing a great deal of good? The

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iii. 12.<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

same, or almost as much, he knew to be true of his own preaching. What he needed to learn, and what he did learn from his messengers, was, that the miracles of which he had heard were really done, and to be reminded of their significance.

2. The Gospels record several controversies of Jesus with over-rigid observers of the sabbath. They found fault with him for laxness in this particular. On one occasion he is said to have met a reproach of this kind with the retort, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"<sup>1</sup> It has been said of the books written by the companions of Napoleon at St. Helena, that it is not difficult to mark off what he really said, his sayings having a recognizable style of their own. They who maintain that a like distinction is to be drawn in the Gospels among the reported sayings of Christ have to concede that he uttered the words above quoted. They are characteristic words. Even Strauss holds that they were spoken by him. If so, on what occasion? Luke says that it was on the occasion of Christ's healing a man who had the dropsy. There must have been a rescue from *some* evil. The evil must have been a very serious one: otherwise the parable of the ox or the ass falling into a pit would be out of place. What more proof is wanted of the correctness of the evangelic tradition, and thus of the miracle? On another sabbath he is said to have cured a woman, who, from a muscular disorder, had been bowed down for eighteen years. His reply to his censors is equally characteristic.<sup>2</sup> If the reply was made, the miracle that occasioned it was done. On still another occasion of the same kind he added to the illustration of a sheep falling into a pit the significant question, "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?"<sup>3</sup> If he uttered these words, then he healed a man with a withered hand. Unless he had just saved a man from some grievous peril, the question is meaningless.

3. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke it is related that Jesus was charged by the Pharisees with casting out demons through the help of Beelzebub their prince.<sup>4</sup> The conversation that ensued upon this accusation is given. Jesus exposed the absurdity of the charge. It implied that Satan was working against himself, and for the subversion of his own kingdom, "If a house be divided

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xii. 22-31; Mark iii. 22-31; Luke xi. 14-23.



against itself, that house cannot stand.”<sup>1</sup> The conversation is stamped with internal marks of authenticity. The fact of this charge having been made against Christ was inwrought into the evangelic tradition. Now, the occasion of the debate was the cure of a man who was blind and dumb. The reader may consider demoniacal possession to be a literal fact, or nothing more than a popular idea or theory: in either case the phenomena — epilepsy, lunacy, etc. — were what presented themselves to observation. It may be said that the Jews had exorcists. Jesus implies this when he asks, “By whom do your children” — that is, your disciples — “cast them out?” Exorcism as practised even early by the Jews is referred to by Josephus.<sup>2</sup> Manipulations and different sorts of jugglery mingled in it. That cases should occur in which actual effects should be produced upon credulous persons is not strange. Yet the cures of this sort which were effected by Christ must have included aggravated cases of mental and physical disorder, or they must have been wrought with a uniformity which distinguished them from similar relief administered by others, sometimes through the medium of prayer and fasting. There was an evident contrast between the power exerted by him in such cases and that with which the Pharisees were acquainted. This is implied in the astonishment which this class of miracles is represented to have called forth. It is implied, also, in the fact that the accusation of a league with Satan was brought against him. They had to assert this, or else admit that it was “with the finger of God” that he cast out devils.<sup>3</sup> “He *commanded* the unclean spirits, and they obeyed him.”

4. We find both in Matthew and Luke a passage in which woes are uttered concerning certain cities of Galilee for remaining impenitent.<sup>4</sup> There is no reason for doubting that they were uttered by Jesus. There is a question as to the time when they were uttered, unless it be assumed that they were spoken on two different occasions; but that chronological question is immaterial here. The authenticity of the tradition is confirmed, if confirmation were required, by the mention of Bethsaida and Chorazin. No account of miracles wrought in these towns is embraced in either of the Gospels.<sup>5</sup> Had the passage been put into the

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiquities*, B. viii. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xi. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xi. 20-25; Luke x. 13-16.

<sup>5</sup> The Bethsaida of Mark viii. 22 was another place, northeast of the lake.

mouth of Jesus falsely, there would naturally have been framed a narrative to match it. There would have stood in connection with it a description, briefer or longer, of miracles alleged to have been done in those towns. Moreover, "in that same hour," according to the first Gospel, Jesus uttered a fervent thanksgiving that the truth, hidden from the wise, had been revealed to the simple-hearted,<sup>1</sup>—a passage that needs no vindication of its authenticity. This outpouring of emotion is a natural sequel to the sorrowful impression made on him by the obduracy of the Galilean cities. In Luke there is the same succession of moods of feeling, although the juxtaposition of the two passages is not quite so close. Now, what is the ground of this condemnation of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida? It is "the mighty works" which they had witnessed. This privilege makes their guilt more heinous than that of Tyre and Sidon. It is the reference to the miracles which gives point to the denunciation.

5. The manner in which faith appears as the concomitant and prerequisite of miracles is a strong confirmation of the evangelical narratives. Faith is required of the apostles for the performance of miraculous works. They fail in the attempt from lack of faith.<sup>2</sup> They are told, that with faith nothing is beyond their power. But it is not their own strength which they are to exert. They lay hold of the power of God, and in that power they control the forces of Nature. So applicants for miraculous help must come to Jesus with faith in his ability to relieve them. The exertion of his restorative power is in response to trust. In one place, he "did not many mighty works," because of the unbelief there.<sup>3</sup> The references to faith as thus connected with miracles are numerous. They are varied in form, obviously artless and uncontrived. They are an undesigned voucher for the truth of the narratives in which they mingle.<sup>4</sup>

6. In connection with one miracle there is instruction as to its design which it is difficult to believe did not emanate from Jesus. It is embedded in the heart of the narrative, as it was an

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 18; Luke ix. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xiii. 58.

<sup>4</sup> See Matt. viii. 10 (Luke vii. 9), ix. 2 (Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20), ix. 22 (Mark v. 34, x. 52), xvii. 20 (Luke xvii. 6); Luke viii. 48, xvii. 19; Matt. xv. 28; Luke vii. 50, xviii. 42; Mark v. 36, ix. 23; Matt. viii. 13; John iv. 50, ix. 38; Acts iii. 16, xiv. 9.

essential part of the transaction.<sup>1</sup> He is in a house at Capernaum surrounded by a crowd. A paralytic is brought by four men, and is let down through the roof, this being the only means of bringing him near Jesus. Seeing their faith, he said tenderly to the paralytic, "Son (or child), be of good courage: thy sins are forgiven thee." The disease, we are led to infer, was the result of sin, it may be of sensuality. The sufferer's pain of heart Jesus first sought to assuage. It was the first step toward his cure. These words struck the scribes who heard them as blasphemous. Jesus divined their thoughts, and asked them which is the easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or "Arise and walk"? If one presupposed divine power, so did the other. Then follows the statement, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" — here he turned to the paralytic — "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The entire narrative is replete with the marks of truth; but this one observation, defining the motive of the miracle, making it subordinate to the higher end of verifying his authority to grant spiritual blessings, carries in it evident marks of authenticity. Did not Jesus say this? If he did, he performed the miracle.

V. We hear it said, and sometimes read in print, that in those days "everybody believed in miracles and felt no surprise at their occurrence." This is not true. The golden age of the Hebrew religion, the period of life and enthusiasm, lay to the Jews of that day, with their dry legalism, in the remote past. Its reappearance, and with it miracles, were looked for when the Messiah should come. The ordinary feeling of surprise at a miracle is expressed in the words attributed by one of the Evangelists to the Jews, "Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that no miracles are attributed to John the Baptist, whom all held to be a prophet, should convince one that the miracles attributed to Jesus were actually performed. The multitude flocked to hear the prophet of the wilderness. Yet he made no claim to work miracles, and none were credited to him by his own disciples.

In the Gospels, John is regarded as a prophet inferior to no other. His career is described. Great stress is laid on his testimony to Jesus. Why are no miracles ascribed to him in them?

<sup>1</sup> Mark ii. 10; cf. Matt. ix. 6; Luke v. 24.

<sup>2</sup> John ix. 22.

They would have served to corroborate his testimony. If there was a propensity in the first disciples of Christ, or in their successors, to imagine miracles where there were none, why are no fabrications of this sort interwoven with the story of John's preaching? They had before them the life of his prototype, Elijah, and the record of the miracles done by him. What (except a regard for truth) hindered them from mingling in the story of the forerunner of Jesus occurrences equally wonderful? Why do we not read that one day he responded to the entreaty of a poor blind man by restoring his sight, that on another occasion he gave back to a widow the life of her son, that at a certain time a woman who had been for years a helpless invalid was immediately cured by a word from the prophet, that the diseased were often brought to him by their friends to be healed? The only answer is that the Gospel narratives are not the product of imagination. They relate the events that actually took place.

VI. It is equally difficult for sceptical criticism to explain why not a miracle is ascribed to Jesus prior to his public ministry. Why should the imagination of the early Christians have stopped short at his baptism? Why did not fancy run back, as in the later apocryphal fictions, over the period that preceded? A definite date is assigned for the beginning of his miraculous agency. Fancy and fraud do not curb themselves in this way.

VII. The persistence of the faith of the apostles in Jesus as the Messiah, and of his faith in himself, admits of no satisfactory explanation when the miracles are denied.

How were the apostles to be convinced that he was the promised, expected Messiah? What were the evidences of it? He took a course opposite to that which they expected the Messiah to take. He planned no political change. He enjoined meekness and patience. He held out to them the prospect of persecution and death as the penalty of adhering to him. Where was the national deliverance which they had confidently anticipated that the Messiah would effect? How intangible, compared with their sanguine hopes, was the good which he sought to impart! Moreover, they heard his claims denied on every side. The guides of the people in religion derided or denounced them. Had there been no exertions of power to impress the senses, and the mind through the senses, it is incredible that the apostles could have believed in him, and have clung to him, in the teeth

of all the influences fitted to inspire distrust. We might ask how Jesus himself could have kept on cherishing the unwavering conviction that he was in truth the Messiah of God, if he found himself possessed of no powers exceeding those of the mortals about him, powers which had been inseparably connected with the coming Messiah. Remembering the miraculous powers of Moses and Elijah, could he, if they were denied to him, have maintained this consciousness, without the least faltering, especially when he saw himself spurned by the rulers, rejected by the people, and at length deserted by his timid disciples?

Strauss is, on the whole, the most prominent writer in modern times who has undertaken to reconstruct the Gospel history, leaving out the miracles. His theory was, that the narratives of miracles are a mythology spontaneously spun out of the imagination of groups of early disciples. But what moved them to build up so baseless a fabric? What was the idea that so possessed the mind as to clothe itself with unconscious fancies? Why, at the foundation of it all, was the fixed expectation that the Messiah must be a miracle-worker? The predictions of the Old Testament and the example of the prophets required it. How was it, then, that, in the absence of this indispensable criterion of the Messianic office, these same disciples believed in Jesus? How came he to believe in himself? To these questions the author of the mythical theory could give no answer which does not shatter his own hypothesis. The same cause which by the supposition impelled to the imagining of miracles that were false must have precluded faith, except on the basis of miracles that were true.

VIII. In the evangelical tradition the miracles enter as potent causes into the nexus of occurrences. They are links which cannot be spared in the chain of events.

Take, for example, the opening chapters of Mark, which most critics at present hold to be the oldest Gospel. There is an exceedingly vivid picture of the first labors of Jesus in Capernaum and its vicinity. His teaching, to be sure, thrilled his hearers. "He taught them as one that had authority."<sup>1</sup> But the intense excitement of the people was due even more to another cause. In the synagogue at Capernaum a demoniac interrupted him with loud cries, calling him "the Holy One of God." At the word of Jesus, after uttering one shriek, the frenzied man became quiet

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 22.



and sane. The mother of Peter's wife was raised from a sick-bed.<sup>1</sup> Other miraculous cures followed. It was the effect of these upon the people that obliged him to rise long before dawn in order to anticipate their coming, and to escape to a retired place for prayer. It was a miracle wrought upon a leper that compelled Jesus to leave the city for "desert places,"—secluded spots, where the people would not throng upon him in so great numbers.<sup>2</sup> Very definite occurrences are traced to particular causes, which are miraculous acts done by Christ. It was the raising of Lazarus and its effect on the people that determined the Jewish rulers to apprehend Jesus without delay and to put him to death. The fact that this event, in a record which contains so many unmistakably authentic details, is the point on which the subsequent history turns, forced upon Renan the conviction that there was an apparent miracle,—something that was taken for a miracle,—and this conviction he was not able to persuade himself absolutely to relinquish.<sup>3</sup>

The miracle at Jericho, which is described, with some diversity in the circumstances, by three of the Evangelists, Keim, always disposed to discount the miraculous, found it impossible to resolve into a fiction.<sup>4</sup> He refers to the fact that all of the first three Gospels record it.<sup>5</sup> He adverts to the fresh and vivid character of the narratives. But the main consideration is the explanation afforded of the rising tide of enthusiasm in the people at this time, of which there is full proof. But Keim, still reluctant to admit the supernatural, alludes to the popular excitement as quickening "the vital and nervous forces," and so restoring the impaired or lost vision of the man healed. It is intimated that this access of nerve-force, coupled with his faith, may have effected the cure. The point which concerns us here is the reality of the transaction as it appeared to the spectators. The physiological solution may pass for what it is worth. If cures had been effected by Jesus in this way, no supernatural factor entering into the means, there would have been conspicuous failures, as well as instances of success; and how would these failures have affected the minds of the disciples and of other witnesses of them, not to speak of the mind of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 35, v. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed., pp. 507, 514.

<sup>4</sup> *Gesch. Jesu von Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xviii. 35-43, xix. 1; Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52.

himself? The resurrection of Jesus, more than any other of the miracles, bridges over an otherwise impassable chasm in the course of events. We see the disciples, an intimidated handful of disheartened mourners. Then we see them on a sudden transformed into a band of bold propagandists of the new faith, eager to avow it and ready to lay down their lives for it. The resurrection is the event which accounts for this marvellous change and for the spread of Christianity which follows. But this event requires to be more thoroughly considered.

IX. The proof of the crowning miracle of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus, cannot be successfully assailed, even were the ordinary views of the sceptical school respecting the origin of the Gospels tenable.

As we stand for the moment on common ground with them, we cannot make use of such an incident as the doubt of Thomas and the removal of it,<sup>1</sup> although this incident, as is conceded respecting other portions of the fourth Gospel, may be historical, even if not John, but another author wrote the book. An uncertainty is thrown over the circumstances relating to the intercourse of the disciples with Jesus after his death, which are found in the Gospels. That is, prior to establishing the genuineness of the Gospels, it is open to question how far the details are faithfully transmitted from the witnesses. But, as regards the cardinal fact of the Gospel, we have definite evidence from an unimpeachable source. The Apostle Paul states with precision the result of his inquiries on the subject.<sup>2</sup> The crucifixion took place A.D. 29 or 30. According to the scheme of chronology which is advocated by Harnack, Paul was converted A.D. 30. According to the ordinary view, the event occurred four years after the crucifixion—that is, A.D. 34. In A.D. 37 he went to Jerusalem, and staid a fortnight with Peter.<sup>3</sup> He was conversant with the apostles and other disciples. He knew what their testimony was. In the church at Corinth there were parties. Some professed to be adherents of one apostle, and some of another. There were those, also, who doubted the truth of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. Paul was interested to show that disbelief on this subject was groundless and destructive of the Christian faith, and, incidentally, to show his equality with the other apostles, in answer to any who might be disposed to call it in question. He enumerates in the

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 24-30.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4-8.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 18.

most distinct manner five interviews of the risen Jesus with the disciples (independently of the miracle which occurred on the journey to Damascus): the appearance of Jesus to Peter, then to "the Twelve," then to five hundred disciples at once, a majority of whom were still living, then to James, then to "all the apostles." Last of all, he adds, "He appeared to me also." He does not imply that he is giving *all* the appearances of the risen Jesus. He is concerned, for the personal reason mentioned above, to make mention of apostles and to place himself in the same category with them. But the appearances which he does record are carefully given in chronological order. "James" is doubtless James, the brother of the Lord. From Paul's explicit statement, and from other perfectly conclusive evidence, it is certain that the first of the supposed appearances of Christ to the disciples was on the morning of the next Sunday after his death. It was on "the third day."<sup>1</sup> Then it was that they believed themselves to have irresistible proof that he had risen from the tomb. This was the principal fact which they proclaimed, the one main foundation of their faith and hope. The question is, Were they, or were they not, deceived? Is the Christian Church founded on a fact or on a delusion? Did Christianity, which owes its existence and spread to this immovable conviction on the part of the apostles, spring from either a fraud or a dream? The notion which once had advocates, that Christ did not really die, but revived from a swoon, is given up. How could he have gone through the crucifixion without dying? What would have been his physical condition, even if a spark of life had remained? If he did not die then, when did he die? Did he and the apostles agree to pretend that he had died? The slander of the Jews, that some of the disciples stole his body, nobody will for a moment credit. Why should men make up a story which was to bring them no benefit, but only contempt, persecution, and death? The question what became of the body of Jesus is one which those who distrust the testimony of the apostles do not satisfactorily answer. It is not doubted that the tomb was found empty. Jewish adversaries had the strongest reason for producing the body if they knew where it was. That would have instantly destroyed the apostles' testimony.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4, cf. Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19, xxvii. 63, xxviii. 1; Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, xiv. 58, xv. 29, xvi. 2, 9; Luke ix. 22, xiii. 32, xviii. 33, xxiv. 1, 7, 21, 46; John ii. 19, xx. 1, 19, 26.

The only hypothesis which has any plausibility at the present day, in opposition to the customary faith of Christians, is the "vision-theory." The idea of it is, that the apostles mistook mental impressions for actual perceptions. Their belief in the resurrection was the result of hallucination. Of this theory, it is to be said that responsibility for the supposed delusion, if it was a delusion, comes back upon the founder of Christianity himself. Whoever thinks that the disciples were self-deceived, not only, as Schleiermacher correctly judges, attributes to them a mental imbecility which would make their entire testimony respecting Christ untrustworthy, but implies that, when Christ chose such witnesses, his judgment was strangely at fault. Or, if Christ willingly permitted or led them to mistake an inward impression for actual perceptions, he is himself the author of error, and forfeits our moral respect.<sup>1</sup> But the vision-theory is built up on false assumptions, and signally fails to explain the phenomena in the case. We need not pause here to examine the affirmation of Paul, that he had personally seen Christ. This must be observed, that he distinguishes that first revelation of Christ to him — which stopped him in his career as an inquisitor, and made him a new man in his convictions and aims — from subsequent "visions and revelations."<sup>2</sup> They were separated in time. It was not on them that Paul professed to found his claim to be an apostle. He refers to them for another purpose. The words that he heard in a moment of ecstasy — whether "in the body or out of the body" he could not tell — he never even repeated.<sup>3</sup> That sight of Jesus which was the prelude of his conversion he gives as the sixth and last of his appearances to the apostles: "Last of all . . . he appeared to me also." It was objective, a disclosure to the senses. It was such a perception of Christ, that his resurrection was proved by it — a fact with which the resurrection of believers is declared to be indissolubly connected.<sup>4</sup> This meant more to him than the survival of the soul. It was to be "clothed upon" with a spiritual body.<sup>5</sup> Nothing less than this does he mean when he says of Christ that "he was buried and that he was raised." Attempts have been made to account for Paul's conversion by referring it to a mental crisis induced by secret misgivings, and leanings toward the faith which he was striving to destroy.

<sup>1</sup> *Christl. Glaube*, vol. ii. p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Cor. xii. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 4; cf. Keim, vol. iii. p. 538, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 12-21.

<sup>5</sup> Compare 2 Cor. v. 3, 4.



Some have brought in a thunder-clap or a sunstroke to help on the effect of the struggle supposed to be taking place within his soul. One trouble with this psychological explanation of the miracle is, that the assumption of previous doubts and of remorseful feelings is not only without historical warrant, but is directly in the teeth of Paul's own assertions. Inward conflict with evil impulses — conflicts of the "flesh" with the "spirit" — were something quite different from such misgivings. It is not true, however, that Paul implies that the appearances of the risen Christ to the other apostles were exactly similar to Christ's appearance to him on the road to Damascus. His claim was simply that he, too, had seen Christ. The circumstances might be wholly different in his case. Jewish Christians who were hostile to Paul made a point of the difference between his knowledge of Christ through visions and the sort of knowledge vouchsafed to the other apostles. The risen Christ whom these saw did not speak to them from heaven. They believed him to be with them on the earth. He had not yet ascended. His real or supposed presence in the body with them was an essential part of what they related. Without it, the whole idea of the ascension was meaningless. We might go farther, and say, that, in the absence of decisive proof to the contrary, it is to be presumed that the accounts which the apostles were in the habit of giving of their interviews with the risen Jesus — facts so immeasurably important to themselves and others — are, in the main, preserved in the Gospels. Why should it be doubted that at least the essential nature of these interviews, or of their impression of them, about which the Apostle Paul had so particularly inquired, can be learned from the Evangelists?

But the details in the Gospel narratives may be left out of account for the present.<sup>1</sup> The main facts indisputably embraced

<sup>1</sup> Inconsistencies, real or only apparent, in respect to the details, in the Gospel narratives, are such as might be expected in accounts from different sources. They are such as are met with in secular history in connection with epoch-making events, the reality of which is not subject to doubt. The hurried and scanty notices in Mark and Matthew are in accord with the habit of restriction to Galilean occurrences. The last twelve verses in Mark do not belong in the text. The text closes abruptly (ver. 8) with the statement that the women did not report to the disciples the message relating to Galilee. Not unlikely the second Gospel was the source of what is set down in the first (except Matthew xxviii. 9, 10). If Mark repeated what was ascertained from Peter, we should expect that he would not have omitted the



in the testimony of the apostles are sufficient. There are criteria of hallucination. If there were not, we should on all occasions be at a loss to know when to credit witnesses, or even when to trust our own senses. We have to consider, in the first place, the state of mind into which the apostles were thrown by the crucifixion. It was a state of sorrow and dejection. Their hopes for the time were crushed. Whoever has seen the dead Christ in the famous painting of Rubens at Antwerp can imagine the feeling of the disciples when they looked on the terrible reality. How was it possible for them within a few days — within two days, in the case of some, if not of all — to recover from the shock? How was it possible that in so short a time joy took the place of grief and fear? Whence came the sudden rekindling of faith, and with it the courage to go forth and testify, at the risk of their own lives, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah? The glowing faith, rising to an ecstasy of peace and assurance, out of which hallucination might spring, did not exist. The necessary materials of illusion were absolutely wanting. The natural suggestion of the language of Paul is that the manifestation to Peter was on the third day, and this is confirmed by Luke (xxiv. 34). There was no long interval of silent brooding over the Master's words and worth. There was no gradual recall of predictions or intimations of a continued presence or another coming that had mingled in his conversations with them. The time was short — a few days. Even then there are no traces of any fever of enthusiasm. The interviews with the risen Christ are set down in the Gospels in a brief, calm way, without any marks of bewildering agitation. No, the revulsion of feeling must have been produced from without. The event that produced it was no creation of the apostles' minds. It took them by surprise. Secondly, the number and variety of the persons — five hundred at once — who constitute the witnesses, heighten the difficulty in the way of the hallucination-theory. Under circumstances so gloomy and disheartening, how were so many persons — comprising, as they must have comprised, all varieties of temperament — transported by the same enthusiasm to such a pitch of bewilder-

appearance of Christ to Peter, which is attested by Paul as well as by Luke. On these points, and on the proof of the occurrence of the manifestations of Christ, certainly the earliest and the most of them in Jerusalem, see the instructive monograph of Loofs, *Die Auferstehungs-Berichte u. ihr Wert* (1898).

ment as to confound a mental image of Christ with the veritable, present reality? But, thirdly, a greater difficulty lies in the limited number of the alleged appearances of Jesus, considering the state of mind which must be assumed to have existed if the hallucination-theory is adopted. Instead of a small number, there would have been a multitude of such "visions." This the analogy of religious delusions authorizes us to assert. If the five hundred collectively imagined themselves to see Christ, a great portion of them would individually, before and after, have imagined the same thing. The limited, carefully marked, distinctly recollected number of the appearances of Jesus to the apostles is a powerful argument against the theory of illusion. Fourthly, connected with this last consideration is another most impressive fact. There was a limitation of time as well as of number. The appearances of Jesus, whatever they were, ceased in a short period. Why did they not continue longer? There were visions of one kind and another afterward. Disbelievers point to these as a proof of the apostles' credulity. Be this as it may, the question recurs, Why were there no more visions of the risen Jesus to be placed in the same category with those enumerated by Paul? Stephen's vision was of Christ in the heavenly world. In the persecutions recorded in Acts, when martyrs were perishing, why were there no Christophanies? There is not a solitary case of an alleged actual appearance of Jesus on the earth to disciples, after the brief period which is covered by the instances recorded by Paul and the Evangelists. There were those distinct occurrences, standing by themselves, definitely marked, beginning at a certain time, ending at a certain time.

We know what the mood of the apostles was from the time of these alleged interviews with the risen Christ. They set about the work of preaching the gospel of the resurrection, and of founding the Church. There was no more despondency, no more faltering. It is undeniable that they are characterized by sobriety of mind, and by a habit of reflection, without which, indeed, the whole movement would quickly have come to an end. The controversies attending the martyrdom of Stephen were not more than two years after the death of Jesus. Then followed the mission to the Jews and to the heathen, the deliberations respecting the position to be accorded to the Gentile converts, and the whole work of organizing and training the churches. To be sure, they claimed to be guided by the Divine Spirit. Light was imparted

to them, from time to time, through visions. Take what view one will of these phenomena, it is plain, that, on the whole, a discreet, reflective habit characterized the apostles. This is clear enough from the Acts, and from the Epistles, on any sane view respecting the credibility of these books which critics are disposed to take. Now this reasonableness and sobriety belonged to the apostles from the first, or it did not. If it did, it excludes the supposition of that abandonment to dreamy emotion and uninquiring reverie which the hallucination-theory implies. If it did not, then it behooves the advocates of this hypothesis to tell what it was that suddenly effected such a change in them. What broke up, on a sudden, the mood of excitement and flightiness which engendered notions of a fictitious resurrection? How was a band of religious dreamers, not gradually, but in a very short space of time, transformed into men of discretion and good sense? Why did these devotees not go on with their delicious dreams, in which they believed Jesus to be visibly at their side. The sudden, final termination, without any outward cause producing it, of an absorbing religious enthusiasm like that which is imputed to the apostles and to the five hundred disciples, is without a parallel in the history of religion.

It is the force of these considerations which compelled so keen a critic as Keim to deny credence to the illusion-theory. "It must be acknowledged," he says, "that this theory, which has lately become popular, is only an hypothesis that explains some things, but does not explain the main thing, nay, deals with the historical facts from distorted and untenable points of view."<sup>1</sup> "If the visions are not a human product, not self-produced; if they are not the blossom and fruit of a bewildering over excitement; if they are something strange, mysterious; if they are accompanied at once with astonishingly clear perceptions and resolves, — then it remains to fall back on a source of them not yet named: it is God and the glorified Christ."<sup>2</sup> Thus the cessation of the visions at a definite point can be accounted for. The extraneous power that produced them ceased to do so. It was, in truth, the personal act and self-revelation of the departed Jesus. Without this supernatural manifestation of himself to convince his disciples that he still lived in a higher form of being, his cause would, in all probability, have come to an end at

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. Jesu von Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 600.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 602.

his death. Faith in him as Messiah would have gradually vanished, the disciples would have gone back to Judaism and the synagogue, and the words of Jesus would have been buried in the dust of oblivion.<sup>1</sup> A powerful impression, not originating in themselves, but coming from without, from Christ himself, alone prevented this catastrophe. The admission of a miracle is extorted from this writer by the untenableness of every other solution that can be thought of. At the end of a work which is largely taken up with attempts, direct or indirect, to displace supernatural agency, Keim finds himself impelled by the sheer pressure of the evidence to assert its reality, and to maintain that the very survival of Christianity in the world after the death of Jesus depended on it. If he still stumbles at the particular form of the miracle which the testimony obliges us to accept, yet the miracle of a self-manifestation of Jesus to the apostles he is constrained to presuppose.

On a question of this kind historical evidence can go no farther. When it is declared by a large number of witnesses who have no motive to deceive, that a certain event took place before their eyes, and when the circumstances forbid the hypothesis of self-deception, there would appear to be no alternative but to admit the reality of the fact. The proof is complete. The fact may still be denied by an unreflecting incredulity. It may be affirmed to be impossible, or to be under any circumstances incapable of proof. Against such a contention, testimony, historical proof of any sort is powerless. The immovable faith of the apostles that Jesus "showed himself alive to them" is a fact that nobody questions. Without that faith Christianity would have died at its birth. Whoever refuses to give credit to their testimony ought to explain in some satisfactory way the origin, strength, and persistence of that faith.

X. The concessions which are extorted by the force of the evidence from the ablest disbelievers in the miracles are fatal to their own cause.

At the beginning of this century the theory of Paulus, the German Euerus, was brought forward. It was the naturalistic solution. The stories of miracles in the New Testament were based on facts which were misunderstood. These were actual occurrences; but they were looked at through a mist of supersti-

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. Jesu von Nazara*, vol. iii. p. 605.



tious belief, and thus misinterpreted and magnified. Jesus had a secret knowledge of potent remedies, and the cures which he effected by the application of them passed for miracles. The instances of raising the dead were cases of only apparent death. For example, Jesus saw that the son of the widow of Nain was not really dead. Perhaps the young man opened his eyes, or stirred, and thus discovered to Jesus that he was alive. Jesus mercifully saved him from a premature burial. He did not think himself called upon to correct the mistaken judgments of the disciples and of others, who attributed his beneficent acts to preternatural power. He allowed himself in a tacit accommodation to the vulgar ideas in these matters. This theory was seriously advocated in learned tomes. It was applied in detail in elaborate commentaries on the Gospels.

Strauss simply echoed the general verdict to which all sensible and right-minded people had arrived, when he scouted this attempted explanation of the Gospel narratives, and derided the exegesis by which it was supported. The theory of Paulus made the apostles fools, and Christ a Jesuit. But the hypothesis which Strauss himself brought forward, if less ridiculous, was not a whit more tenable. Unconscious myths generated by communities of disciples who mistook their common fancies for facts; myths generated by bodies of disciples cut off from the care and oversight of the apostles who knew better; by disciples, who, nevertheless, succeeded in substituting in all the churches their fictitious narrative, in the room of the true narrative, which was given by the apostles,—here were improbabilities so gross as to prevent the mythical theory from gaining a lasting foothold in the field of historical criticism. It was impossible, as it was explained above, to see how the faith of the myth-making division of disciples was produced at the start. No such class of disciples, cut off from the superintendence of the apostles, existed. If it be supposed that such a class of disciples did exist, the agents who planted Christianity in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire were not from these, but were the apostles and their followers. And then, how could the established tradition as to Christ's life be superseded by another narrative, emanating from some obscure source, and presenting a totally diverse conception from that which the apostles or their pupils were teaching? So the mythical theory went the way of the naturalistic scheme of Paulus.



Seeing his failure, Strauss afterward tried to change the definition of myth, and to introduce an element of conscious invention into the idea; but in so doing he destroyed the work of his own hands. Or rather he sought shelter in a house which he, in common with many others, had shown to be built on the sand.

Renan has undertaken, in a series of volumes, to furnish upon the naturalistic basis an elaborate explanation of the origin of Christianity. In the successive editions of his *Life of Jesus* he has considered and reconsidered the problem of the miracles. What has he to say? He tells us that miracles at that epoch were thought indispensable to the prophetic vocation. The legends of Elijah and Elisha were full of them. It was taken for granted that the Messiah would perform many.<sup>1</sup> Jesus believed that he had a gift of healing. He acquired repute as an exorcist.<sup>2</sup> Nay, it is undeniable that "acts which would now be considered fruits of illusion or hallucination had a great place in the life of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> The four Gospels, he holds, render this evident. Renan sees that there is no way of escaping the conclusion that miracles *seemed* to be wrought, and that they were a very marked feature in the history as it actually occurred. Those about Jesus — the *entourage* — were probably more struck with the miracles than with anything else.<sup>4</sup> How shall this be accounted for? Illusion in the mind of Jesus, an exaggerated idea of his powers, will go a little way toward a solution of the question, but does not suffice. It must be held that the part of a thaumaturgist was forced on Jesus by the craving of disciples and the demand of current opinion. He had either to renounce his mission or to comply.<sup>5</sup> His miracles were "a violence done him by his age, a concession which a pressing necessity wrested from him."<sup>6</sup> There were miracles, or transactions taken for miracles, in which he consented "to play a part."<sup>7</sup> He was reluctant; it was distasteful to him; but he consented. Then come M. Renan's apologies for Jesus. Sincerity is not a trait of Orientals. We must not be hard upon deception of this sort. We must conquer our "repugnances." "We shall have a right to be severe upon such men when we have accomplished as much with our scruples as they with their lies."

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, p. 266, cf. p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 513.

In that impure city of Jerusalem, Jesus was no longer himself. His conscience, by the fault of others, had lost its original clearness. He was desperate, pushed to the extremity, no longer master of himself. Death must come to restore him to liberty, to deliver him from a part which became every hour more exacting, more difficult to sustain.<sup>1</sup>

In plain English, Jesus was an impostor, reluctantly, yet really and consciously. From enthusiasm it went on to knavery; for pious fraud, notwithstanding M. Renan's smooth deprecation, is *fraud*. The Son of man sinks out of sight, with his conscience clouded, his character fallen. M. Renan's excuses for him are not mere excuses for a wicked person, or one thought to be such, but for wickedness itself. Even his apologies for Judas are less offensive.

This defamation of Jesus is for the theory of disbelief a *reductio ad absurdum*. The wise and good of all Christian ages are told that their veneration is misplaced. Jesus was not the "holy one." There is nothing even heroic in him. He is swept away by a popular current, giving up his rectitude, giving up his moral discrimination. He is made up in equal parts of the visionary and the deceiver. By his moral weakness he brings himself into such an entanglement, that to escape from it by death is a piece of good fortune. He to whom mankind have looked up as to the ideal of holiness turns out to be, first a dreamer, then a fanatic and a charlatan. It is proved that a clean thing can come out of an unclean. Out of so muddy a fountain there has flowed so pure a stream. Courage, undeviating truth, steadfast loyalty to right against all seductions, in all these Christian ages, have sprung from communion with a dishonest man, who obeyed the maxim that the end justifies the means. For no gloss of rhetoric can cover up the meaning that lies underneath M. Renan's fine phrases. When the light coating of French varnish is rubbed off, it is a picture of degrading duplicity that is left.

This is the last word of scientific infidelity. Let the reader mark the point to which his attention is called. On any rational theory about the date and authorship of the Gospels, it is found impossible to doubt that facts supposed at the time of their occurrence to be miraculous were plentiful in the life of Jesus. The advocates of Atheism are driven to the hypothesis of hallucination

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, p. 375.

with a large infusion of pious fraud. There is no fear that such a theory will prevail. No being could exist with the heterogeneous, discordant qualities attributed by Renan to Christ. Were such a being possible, the new life of humanity could never have flowed from so defiled a source.

The arguments which this chapter contains will not convince an atheist. One who denies that God is a personal being is, in direct proportion to the force of his conviction, debarred from believing in a miracle. There can be no supernatural element introduced into the course of events if nothing supernatural exists. One will either seek for some other explanation of the phenomena, or leave the problem unsolved. Secondly, these arguments, it is believed, separately taken, are valid; but they are also to be considered together. Their collective strength is to be estimated. If the single rod could be broken, the same may not be true of the bundle. Thirdly, it is not to be forgotten that demonstrative reasoning on questions of historical fact is precluded. He who requires a coercive argument where probable reasoning alone is applicable must be left in doubt or disbelief. In the strongest conceivable case of probable reasoning there is always a *possibility* of the opposite opinion being true. Enough that *reasonable* doubt is excluded.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On Heathen and Ecclesiastical Miracles, see Appendix, Note 21.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GOSPELS AN AUTHENTIC RECORD OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY THE APOSTLES

WHAT did the apostles testify? Is their testimony concerning Jesus to be relied on? In the historical inquiry which we are pursuing, these are the questions to be answered. The subject of the authorship and date of the Gospels is important from its relation to the first of these points. Only by investigating the origin of the Gospels can we ascertain whether these writings are a trustworthy account of the testimony given by the apostles. But proof, from whatever quarter it may come, that such is the fact, even though not touching directly the question by what particular authors the Gospels were written, it is pertinent to adduce. And proof of this character, it will be seen, is not wholly wanting.

There is one remark to be made at the threshold of the discussion before us. The circumstance that the Gospels contain accounts of miracles gives rise, in some minds, to a conscious or unconscious disinclination to refer these writings to the apostles, or to regard them as a fair and true representation of their testimony. But this bias is unreasonable. Apart from the general consideration, that the very idea of revelation implies miracle, it has been already proved that accounts of miracles, and of some at least of the very miracles recorded in these histories, did form a part of the narratives of the ministry of Jesus which the apostles were accustomed to give.

The proof of the genuineness of the Gospels is like that which determines the authorship of other ancient writings — for example, the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus, who was a contemporary of the apostles, Plutarch's *Lives*, or the histories of Livy and Tacitus. In the case of the Gospels we have additional sources of proof in the relation of the Gospels to the Christian societies, the unique interest felt in these narratives, and the wide-spread use made of them. The idea that they were not ascribed to their

real authors is unreasonable, unless definite objections can be alleged of sufficient weight to counteract the customary force of evidence from the tradition. Doubts resting on no solid basis, or guesses, are as little to be regarded as if they had reference to the authorship of the orations of Cicero.

The universal reception of the four Gospels as having exclusive authority by the churches in the closing part of the second century, requires to be accounted for, if their genuineness is called in question. The Christian literature which has survived from the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second is scanty and fragmentary. But when we come out into the light in the last quarter of the second century, we find the Gospels of the canon in undisputed possession of the field. We hear, moreover, from all quarters, the declaration that these are the Gospels which have come down from the apostles. We are given to understand that their genuineness had never been questioned in the churches. There was no centralized organization, be it remembered, such as might be misled by designing men to lend authority to their claims. They owed this universal acceptance to the concerted action of no priesthood, to the decree of no council. The simple fact is, that these books — ascribed respectively to four authors, two of whom were apostles, and the other two were not — were recognized by the Christian churches everywhere, and, it was alleged, had been thus recognized without dispute. Here is Irenæus, born at least as early as A.D. 130 — probably a number of years earlier<sup>1</sup> — in Asia Minor, bishop of the church of Lyons from A.D. 178 to 202; an upright man in a conspicuous position, and with ample means of acquiring a knowledge of the churches in Asia Minor and Italy, as well as in Gaul. In defending Christian truth against the grotesque speculations of the Gnostics, he is led, at the beginning of the third book of his treatise, to make his appeal to the Scriptures. This leads him to present an account of the composition of the Gospels, — how

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 264) would fix the date of Irenæus's birth at A.D. 120; Ropes (*Bib. Sacra*, April, 1877, pp. 288 *seq.*), at about A.D. 126; so Hilgenfeld. But Zahn argues ably (Herzog u. Plitt's *Real. Encycl.*, vii. 134 *seq.*) for an earlier date, A.D. 115. Harnack formerly in accord (*Die Überlieferung d. griechischen Apologg. d. 2ten Jahrh.*, p. 204) now would assign A.D. 130 as the earliest admissible date, but favors a date "shortly before A.D. 142" (*Chronologie*, i. 329).



Matthew published "a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language"; Mark put in writing "the things that were preached by Peter"; Luke, "the attendant of Paul," wrote the third Gospel; and "afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast—he again put forth his Gospel while he abode at Ephesus in Asia."<sup>1</sup> He is not, be it observed, announcing any new discoveries. He is simply explaining what was commonly understood. These Gospels, and no others, he tells us, the churches acknowledge. Fully to illustrate how Irenæus constantly assumes the exclusive authority of the Gospels of the canon would require us to transfer to these pages no inconsiderable part of his copious work. Passing over the sea to Alexandria, we find Clement, who was born probably at Athens, certainly not later than A.D. 160, and was at the head of the catechetical school in the city of his adoption from A.D. 190 to 203, having previously travelled in Greece, Italy, Syria, and Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Referring to a statement in an apocryphal Gospel, he remarks that it is not found "in the four Gospels which have been handed down to us."<sup>3</sup> In another place he states the order in which these Gospels were written as he had learned it from "the oldest presbyters."<sup>4</sup> Then, from the church of North Africa we have the emphatic affirmations of Tertullian (born about A.D. 160) of the sole authority of the four Gospels, which were written by apostles and by apostolic men, their companions.<sup>5</sup> In the churches founded by the apostles, and by the churches in fellowship with them, he asserts, the Gospel of Luke had been received since its first publication. "The same authority of the apostolic churches," he adds, "will also support the other Gospels," of which Matthew, Mark, and John were the authors. The Muratorian Fragment of Roman origin, the date of which is not far from A.D. 170, is a fragment which begins in the middle of a sentence. That sentence, from its resemblance to a statement made by an earlier writer, Papias, respecting Mark, as well as from what immediately follows in the document itself, evidently relates to this Evangelist. This broken sentence is succeeded by an account of the composition of Luke, which is designated as the third Gospel, and then of John. In Syria, the Peshito, the Bible of the ancient Syrian churches, having its origin at about the same time

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Har.*, ii. 1.      <sup>2</sup> *Euseb., H. E.*, v. 11.      <sup>3</sup> *Strom.*, iii. 553 (ed. Potter).

<sup>4</sup> *τῶν ἀνέκαθεν πρεσβυτέρων*, *Euseb., H. E.*, vi. 14.      <sup>5</sup> *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 2-6.

as the Muratorian Fragment, begins with the four Gospels. The canon of Scripture was then in process of formation; and the absence from the Peshito of the second and third Epistles of John, second Peter, Jude, and Revelation, — books which were disputed in the ancient church, — is a proof at once of the antiquity of that version and of the value of the testimony given by it to the universal reception of the Gospels.

It must be borne in mind that the Fathers who have been named above are here referred to, not for the value of their opinion as individuals in regard to the authorship of the Gospels, but as witnesses for the footing which they had in the churches. These Christian societies now encircled the Mediterranean. They were scattered over the Roman Empire from Syria to Spain.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the exultation of the Fathers of the second century over the rapid spread and the prospects of Christianity led to hyperbole in describing the progress it had made.<sup>2</sup> But, making all due allowance for rhetorical fervor, it is to be remembered that, in writing for contemporaries, it would have been folly for them intentionally to indulge in misstatement in a matter of statistics with which their readers were as well acquainted as they were themselves. Christians had become numerous enough to excite anxiety more and more in the rulers of the empire. The question to be answered is, how this numerous, widely dispersed body had been led unanimously to pitch upon these four narratives as the sole authorities for the history of Jesus. For what reasons had they adopted, *nullo contradicente*, these four Gospels exclusively, one of which was ascribed to Matthew, a comparatively obscure apostle, and two others to Luke and Mark, neither of whom belonged among the Twelve?

But the situation of these Fathers personally, as it helps us to determine the value of their judgment on the main question, is

<sup>1</sup> There were Christians in Spain (Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i. 10, 2; Tertullian, *Adv. Judæos*, c. 7). If, as is probable, Spain is designated by the τὸ τέρμα τῆς δόσεως of Clement of Rome (*Ep.*, v.), St. Paul visited that country. See Bishop Lightfoot's note (*The Epp. of Clement of Rome*, p. 49).

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian (*Adv. Judæos*, c. 7; *Apol.*, c. 37), Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, i. 10, 1, 2; iii. 4, 1), cf. Justin (*Dial.*, c. 117). For Gibbon's comments on these statements, see *Decline and Fall*, etc., ch. xv. (Smith's ed., ii. 213, n. 177). Gibbon refers to Origen's remark (*Contra Cels.*, viii. 69), that the Christians are "very few" comparatively; but he omits another passage (c. ix.) of the same work, in which Origen refers to them as a "multitude," of all ranks.

worth considering. Irenæus has occasion, in connection with the passage already cited from him, to dwell on the tradition respecting the teaching of the apostles which is preserved in the various churches founded by them. Of these churches he says, that it is easy to give the lists of their bishops back to their foundation. By way of example, he states the succession of the Roman bishops. In these lists, as given by the ancient writers, there will be some discrepancies as to the earliest names, owing chiefly to the fact that, in the time before episcopacy was fully developed, leading presbyters, and not always the same persons, would be set down in the catalogues.<sup>1</sup> But a person who is familiar now with any particular church in whose history he has felt a strong interest will have little difficulty in recounting the succession of its pastors extending back for a century, and will not be ignorant of any very remarkable events which have occurred in its affairs during that period. Moreover, Irenæus was acquainted with individuals who had been taught by John and by other apostles. He had known in early life Polycarp, whose recollections of the Apostle John were fresh.<sup>2</sup> He had conferred with "elders" — that is, venerated leaders in the Church, of an earlier day — who had been pupils of men whom the apostles had instructed. His language indicates that some of them had sat at the feet of the apostles themselves.<sup>3</sup> Of one of these "elders" in particular he makes repeated mention, whose name is not given, but whom in one place he styles "apostolorum discipulus."<sup>4</sup> The phrase hardly admits of more than one interpretation. Pothinus, whom Irenæus succeeded at Lyons, was thrown into prison in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 177, and died two days after, being past ninety

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler's *Church History*, I. i. 3, § 34, n. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4; *Epist. ad Flor.*

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, ii. 22, 5; iii. 1, 1; iii. 3, 4; v. 32, 1; v. 33, 3; v. 33, 4; cf. Euseb., *H. E.*, iii. 23, iv. 14, v. 8. In iv. 27, 1, Irenæus speaks of what he had heard from a certain presbyter "who had heard from those who had seen the Apostles, et ab his qui didicerant." The last clause may denote "those who were disciples of Christ himself," or the "ab his" may belong after "qui," and the meaning may be "those who had been taught" by such as had seen the apostles. See the comment of Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 266. See also the elaborate discussion, embracing a review of Harnack's interpretations, in Zahn's *Forschungen zur Gesch. d. N. T. Kanons u. d. altkirchl. Lit.*, Theil vi., p. 53 seq.

<sup>4</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, iv. 32, 1.

years old. Pothinus was probably from Asia Minor, whence the church at Lyons was planted. His memory ran back beyond the beginning of the century. He is one of many who had numbered among their acquaintances younger contemporaries of apostles. Clement of Alexandria was a pupil of Pantænus, who had founded the catechetical school there shortly after the middle of the second century. As a Christian learner, he had been taught by prominent teachers in different countries in the East and in the West. In all of the oldest churches there were persons who were separated from apostles by only one link.

The attempt has often been made to discredit the testimony of Irenæus by reference to a passage which really strengthens it. After asserting that there are four Gospels and no more, he fancifully refers to the analogy of the four winds, four divisions of the earth, four faces of the cherubim, four covenants, etc.<sup>1</sup> We are told by Froude, "That there were four true evangelists, and that there could be neither more nor less than four, Irenæus had persuaded himself, because there were four winds or spirits," etc.<sup>2</sup> It is plain to every reader of Irenæus, that his belief in the four Gospels is founded on the witness given by the churches and by well-informed individuals, to their authenticity, and that these analogies merely indicate how entirely unquestioned was the authority of the Gospels in his own mind and in the minds of all Christian people. It was something as well settled as the cosmical system. If some enthusiast for the Hanoverian house were to throw out the suggestion that there must be four, and only four, Georges, because there are four quarters of the globe, four winds, etc., Froude would hardly announce that the man's conviction of the historic fact that those four kings have ruled in England is founded on these fanciful parallels. Froude himself shrinks from his own assertion as quoted above; for he adds, "It is not to be supposed that the intellects of those great men who converted the world to Christianity were satisfied with arguments so imaginative as these; they must have had other closer and more accurate grounds for the decision," etc. But then he continues, "The mere employment of such figures as evidence in any sense shows the enormous difference between their modes of reasoning and ours, and illustrates the difficulty of deciding, at our present distance from them, how far their conclusions were satisfactory." If they

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 2, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, p. 213.

had "other closer and more accurate" grounds of belief, why should such instances of weakness in reasoning, even were it intended as strict reasoning, operate to destroy the value of their testimony? A man who is not a faultless logician may be a perfectly credible witness to facts within his cognizance. But the inference suggested by Froude's remark as to the intellectual character of Irenæus is hasty. A single instance of weak reasoning is a slender basis for so broad a conclusion. Jonathan Edwards is rightly considered a man of penetrating intellect and of unsurpassed skill in logic. Yet in his diary he makes this absurd remark: "January, 1728. I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning, by his rising from the grave so early."<sup>1</sup> Certainly no one would feel himself justified, on account of Edwards's remark, in disputing his word on a matter of fact within his personal cognizance. We do not mean that Irenæus had the same measure of intellectual vigor as Edwards; nevertheless, he is not to be stigmatized as a weak man, and he furnishes in his writings a great many examples of sound reasoning. The inference unfavorable to the value of his testimony, which Froude in common with many others has drawn from a single instance of fanciful argument or illustration, is itself an example of flimsy logic.

In quoting the statements of the Christian writers of the closing part of the second century, it is not implied, of course, that either they or their informants were incapable of error. Who does not know that traditions, the substance of which is perfectly trustworthy, may interweave incidental or minor details, which, if not without foundation, at least require to be sifted? A tradition may take up new features of this character, even in passing from one individual to another, when there is an average degree of accuracy in both. But every intelligent historical critic knows the distinction which is to be made between essential facts and their accessories. It is only the ignorant, or the sophist who has an end to accomplish, that ignore this distinction, and seek to apply the maxim, *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, which relates to wilful mendacity, to the undesigned modifications which oral statements are almost sure to experience in the process of transmission from one to another. It is evident that the few documents on which the Christians of the second century depended for their knowledge of the life and ministry of Christ must have had an importance

<sup>1</sup> Dwight's *Life of Edwards*, p. 106.



in their eyes which would render the main facts as to the origin of these writings of extreme interest and importance. As to these documents, the foundation of the faith for which they were exposing themselves to torture and death, information would be earnestly sought and highly prized. That this curiosity, which we should expect to find, really existed, the ecclesiastical writers plainly indicate.

Let us now step back from the age of Irenæus to the first half of the second century. In that obscure period, where so many writings which might have thrown light on the questions before us have perished, there is one author who is competent to afford us welcome information. It is Justin Martyr. He was born in Palestine, at Flavia Neapolis, near the site of the ancient Sichem. He was in Ephesus about A.D. 135. He had been an adherent of the Platonic School, and at this date wore the garb of a philosopher, a fact which shows that he was not a youth. From his pen there remain two apologies, the second being the sequel or appendix of the first, which was addressed to Antoninus Pius, not later than A.D. 152, and a dialogue with Trypho, a Jew. In these writings, two of which are directed to heathen, and the third designed to influence Jews, there was no occasion to refer to the Evangelists by name. The sources from which he draws his accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus are styled *Memoirs*, a term borrowed from the title given by Xenophon to his reminiscences of Socrates. Were these *Memoirs* the four Gospels of the canon? <sup>1</sup>

The first observation to be made is, that a tolerably full narrative of the life of Jesus can be put together from Justin's quotations and allusions, and that this narrative coincides with the canonical Gospels. The quotations are not verbally accurate; neither are Justin's citations from heathen writers or the Old Testament prophets. He is not always in verbal agreement with

<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the *Memoirs* of Justin and his quotations, the following writers are of special value: Semisch, *Die apostolischen Denkwürdigkeiten des Märtyrers Justinus* (1848); Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 88-138; Norton, *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. pp. 200-240, ccxiv.-ccxxxiii.; Westcott, *History of the Canon of the N. T.* (1881), pp. 96-179; Professor E. Abbot, "The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," *Critical Essays* (I); Purves, *The Testimony of Justin Martyr, etc.* (1889); also Bleek's *Einl. in d. N. T.* (ed. Mangold), p. 271 seq.; Hilgenfeld's *Kritisch. Untersuch. über die Evangell. Justins, der Clementiner, u. Marcions*.

himself when he has occasion to cite a passage or to refer to an incident more than once.<sup>1</sup> It was not a custom of the early Fathers to quote the New Testament writers with verbal accuracy. Justin blends together statements in the different Gospels. This is easily accounted for on the supposition that he was quoting from memory, and when it is remembered that, for the purpose which he had in view, he had no motive to set off carefully to each Evangelist what specially belonged to him. A similar habit of connecting circumstances from the several Gospels is not unfrequent at present, familiar as these writings have now become. It is impossible here to combine all the items of the gospel history which may be gathered up from Justin's writings, but an idea of their character and extent may be given by casting a portion of them into a consecutive narrative.<sup>2</sup>

The Messiah, according to Justin, was born of a virgin. Particulars of the annunciation (Luke i. 26, 31, 35) and of Joseph's dream (Matt. i. 18-25) are given. He was born in Bethlehem, where his parents were, in consequence of the census under Quirinius. He was laid in a manger, was worshipped by the Magi, was carried by his parents into Egypt on account of the machinations of Herod, which led to the massacre of the children in Bethlehem. From Egypt they returned, after the death of Herod. At Nazareth Jesus grew up to the age of thirty, and was a carpenter (Mark vi. 3). There he remained until John appeared in his wild garb, declaring that he was not the Christ (John i. 19 *seq.*), but that One stronger than he was coming, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear. John was put in prison, and was beheaded, at a feast on Herod's birthday, at the instance of his sister's daughter (Matt. xiv. 6 *seq.*). This John was the Elijah who was to come (Matt. xvii. 11-13). Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan. The temptation followed. To Satan's demand to be worshipped, Jesus replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan," etc. Jesus wrought miracles, healing the blind, dumb, lame, all weakness and disease, and raising the dead. He began his teaching by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. iv. 17). Justin introduces a large number of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, sayings from the narrative of the centurion of Capernaum (Matt. viii. 11, 12; Luke xiii.

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Matt. xi. 27. See *Apol.*, i. 63; *Dial.*, 106.

<sup>2</sup> The quotations from Justin are collected in Credner's *Beiträge zur Einl.*, etc., pp. 150-209. The *résumé* above is mainly abridged from Dr. Sanday's *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 91-98. Summaries of a like nature are given in Mr. Sadler's *The Lost Gospel and its Contents* (London, 1876); also by Purves, *The Testimony of Justin Martyr*, p. 179 *seq.*

28, 29), and of the feast in the house of Matthew. He brings in the choosing of the twelve disciples, the name Boanerges given to the sons of Zebedee (Mark iii. 17), the commission of the apostles, the discourse of Jesus after the departure of the messengers of John, the sign of the prophet Jonah, Peter's confession of faith (Matt. xvi. 15-18), the announcement of the passion (Matt. xvi. 21). Justin has the story of the rich young man; the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; the cleansing of the temple; the wedding-garment; the conversations upon the tribute-money, upon the resurrection (Luke xx. 35, 36), and upon the greatest commandment; the denunciations of the Pharisees; the eschatological discourse; and the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30). Justin's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper corresponds to that of Luke. Jesus is said to have sung a hymn at the close of the Supper, to have retired with three of his disciples to the Mount of Olives, to have been in an agony, his sweat falling in drops to the ground (Luke xxii. 42-44). His followers forsook him. He was brought before the scribes and Pharisees, and before Pilate. He kept silence before Pilate. Pilate sent him bound to Herod (Luke xxiii. 7). Most of the circumstances of the crucifixion are narrated by Justin, such as the piercing with nails, the casting of lots, the fact of sneers uttered by the crowd, the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the last words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). Christ is said to have been buried in the evening, the disciples being all scattered, according to Zech. xiii. 7 (Matt. xxvi. 31, 56). On the third day he rose from the dead. He convinced his disciples that his sufferings had been predicted (Luke xxiv. 26, 46). He gave them his last commission. They saw him ascend into heaven (Luke xxiv. 50). The Jews spread a story that the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave (Matt. xxviii. 3).

This is a mere outline of the references to the gospel history which are scattered in profusion through Justin's writings. A full citation of them would exhibit more impressively their correspondence to the Gospels. Harnack does not doubt that the Gospel and the First Epistle of John were known and cherished by Papias and the Presbyters, his informants, and that both works were extant before the end of Trajan's reign. There is no longer need, so far as their date is concerned, to discuss their relation either to Justin, or to Valentinus, or to Marcion.<sup>1</sup> The larger portion of the matter, it will be perceived, accords with what we find in Matthew and Luke; a small portion of it, however, is found in Mark exclusively. The Synoptics had been longer in use, and

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Die Chronologie d. altchristl. Lit.*, I. pp. 658, 659.

citations from them, especially of sayings of Christ, were more current. Besides, Justin's aim was an apologetic one. He was not writing for Christian believers. Passages from the Synoptics he might naturally find better suited to the special ends he had in view. But there are not wanting clear and striking correspondences to John. The most important of these single passages is that relating to regeneration,<sup>1</sup> which, notwithstanding certain verbal variations to be noticed hereafter, bears a close resemblance to John iii. 3-5. Again: Christ is said by Justin to have reproached the Jews as knowing neither the Father nor the Son (John viii. 19, xvi. 3). He is said to have healed those who were blind from "their birth,"<sup>2</sup> using here a phrase which, like the fact, is found in John alone among the Evangelists (John ix. 1). Strongly as these and some other passages resemble incidents and sayings in John, the correspondence of Justin's doctrinal statements respecting the divinity of Christ and the Logos to the teaching of the fourth Gospel is even more significant. These statements are so many, and the emphasis attached to the doctrine is such, that an acknowledged authority must be at the basis of them. Justin speaks of Christ as the Son of God, "who alone is properly called Son, the Word; who also was with him, and was begotten before" the works.<sup>3</sup> He says of Christ, that "he took flesh, and became man."<sup>4</sup> We are "to recognize him as God coming forth from above, and Man living among men."<sup>5</sup> Conceptions of this sort expressed in language either identical with that of John, or closely resembling it, enter into the warp and woof of Justin's doctrinal system. They are both in substance and style Johannean. It is not strange that he was acquainted with the Alexandrian Jewish philosophy, and that traces of its influence are not absent. But the incarnation was a conception foreign to that system. Professed theologians may think themselves able to point out shades of difference between Justin's idea of the preëxistence and divinity of Christ and that of the fourth Gospel. But, if there be an appreciable difference, it is far less marked than differences which subsist among ancient and modern interpreters of the Gospel without number. The efforts of the author of the work entitled *Supernatural Religion* to make out a great diversity of idea from

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Dial.*, c. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Apol.*, ii. 6. Cf. *Dial.*, 129.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 23.

unimportant variations of language — as in the statement that the Logos “became man,” instead of the Hebraic expression, “became flesh” — hardly merit attention. Some of his criticisms apply with equal force to the Nicene Creed, and would prove its authors to have been unacquainted with the fourth Gospel, or not to have believed in it.<sup>1</sup>

The next observation respecting Justin is, that his reference to events or sayings in the Gospel history which have not substantial parallels in the four evangelists are few and insignificant.<sup>2</sup> They embrace not more than two sayings of Jesus. The first is, “In what things I shall apprehend you, in these will I judge you,”<sup>3</sup> which is found also in Clement of Alexandria<sup>4</sup> and Hippolytus.<sup>5</sup> The second is, “There shall be schisms and heresies,”<sup>6</sup> — a prediction referred also to Christ by Tertullian<sup>7</sup> and Clement.<sup>8</sup> Thus both passages occur in other writers who own no authoritative Gospels but the four of the canon. Justin represents the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus as saying, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,”<sup>9</sup> — a combination of expressions, which is found in the Codex Bezae, in

<sup>1</sup> See *The Lost Gospel*, etc., p. 91. In *Dial.*, c. 105, Justin is more naturally understood as referring a statement peculiar to the *Memoirs* to John. See Professor E. Abbot, “Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Critical Essays*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Scholars have searched in the early Christian literature for sayings attributed to Christ which are not found in the four Gospels. The best known example of these *agrapha*, as they are termed, is the saying in Acts xx. 35, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” One of the best of the class of authors referred to is Resch, whose collection of materials has been critically examined by Professor J. H. Ropes. (*Die Sprüche Jesu*, etc., in Gebhardt u. Harnack’s *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, etc., xiv. 2.) Professor Ropes reduces the number of such non-canonical sayings which, with any measure of probability, are really traceable to Jesus, to twenty-one. The Oxyrhynchus Fragment, discovered not long ago in Egypt, contains seven *logia*, or sayings of this character. Other local or special collections of a like nature may, perhaps, yet be found. It must be said, however, that on the lists occur a not inconsiderable number, a comparison of which with the canonical sayings of Christ awakens a decided doubt as to their authenticity.

<sup>3</sup> *Dial.*, c. 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Quis div. salvus*, c. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Opp. ed. de Lag.*, p. 73 (Otto’s *Justin*, i. 2, p. 161, n. 21). The origin of the passage has been traced by some to Ezekiel, to whom Justin refers in the context. See Ezek. vii. 3, 8, xviii. 30, xxiv. 14, xxxiii. 20. Otto suggests that it may have been a marginal summary attached by some one to Matt. xxiv. 40 seq., xxv. 1 seq.

<sup>6</sup> *Dial.*, c. 35, cf. c. 51; cf. 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.

<sup>7</sup> *De Præscript. Hær.*, c. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Strom.*, vii. 15, § 90.

<sup>9</sup> *Dial.*, c. 88, cf. c. 103.



Clement of Alexandria,<sup>1</sup> in Augustine,<sup>2</sup> and is said by him to be the reading in some manuscripts, though not the oldest.<sup>3</sup> The recurrence of the same expression in Ps. ii. 7, or Acts xiii. 33, Heb. i. 5, v. 5, led naturally to a confusion of memory, out of which this textual reading may have easily sprung. That Jesus was charged by the Jews with being a magician<sup>4</sup> is a statement made by Lactantius<sup>5</sup> as well as by Justin. There is evidence that it was probably derived by Justin from his Jewish contemporaries. The incidental saying, that the ass on which Jesus rode was tied to a vine,<sup>6</sup> was probably a detail taken up from Gen. xlix. 11, with which it is connected by Justin. The saying connected with the designation of Jesus as a carpenter, that he made ploughs and yokes,<sup>7</sup> may have sprung from his words in Luke ix. 62 and Matt. xi. 29, 30. It was found pleasant to imagine him to have once made these objects to which he figuratively referred.<sup>8</sup> Justin speaks of Jesus as having been born in a cave,<sup>9</sup> but he also says that he was laid in a manger. That the stable which contained the manger was a cave or grotto was a current tradition in the time of Origen.<sup>10</sup> One other allusion is found in the brief catalogue of uncanonical passages in Justin. He speaks of a fire kindled on the Jordan in connection with the baptism of Jesus, — a circumstance which might have mingled itself early in the oral tradition. These constitute the supplement to the contents of the four Gospels to be found in the mass of Justin's references :<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pæd.*, i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Enchir. ad. Laur.*, c. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *De Cons. Evv.*, ii. 14 (Otto, i. 1, p. 325).

<sup>4</sup> *Dial.*, c. 49, cf. *Apol.*, i. 30.

<sup>8</sup> See Otto, i. 2, p. 324; Semisch, p. 393.

<sup>5</sup> *Institut.*, v. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Dial.*, c. 78.

<sup>6</sup> *Apol.*, i. c. 32.

<sup>10</sup> *Cont. Celsum*, i. 51.

<sup>7</sup> *Dial.*, c. 88.

<sup>11</sup> Other slight variations from the Gospels are sometimes owing to the wish of Justin to accommodate the facts in the life of Jesus to the predictions of the Old Testament. This is especially the case, as might be expected, in the dialogue with Trypho the Jew. The following, it is believed, are all the instances of circumstantial deviation from the Evangelists. Mary is said to have descended from David (*Dial.*, c. 43, cf. cc. 45, 100, 120). This statement is connected (c. 68) with Isa. vii. 13. Irenæus and Tertullian say the same of Mary. The Magi came from Arabia (*Dial.*, c. 77, cf. cc. 78, 88, 102, 106), on the basis of Ps. lxxii. 10, 15; Isa. lx. 6. The same is said by many later writers (Semisch, p. 385). In connection with Ps. xxii. 11, it is said (*Dial.*, c. 103), that, when Jesus was seized, not a single person was there to help him. In *Dial.*, c. 103, Pilate is said to have sent Jesus to Herod *bound*; this being suggested by Hos. vi. 1. So Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, iv. c. 42; also Cyril of Jerusalem (see Otto, i. 2, p. 370, n. 14). The Jews, it is said (*Apol.*, i. 35), set Jesus on the judgment-seat, and said, "Judge us," — which may be a confused recollection of John xix. 13, in connection with Matt. xxvii. 26, 30. In *Dial.*, i. 101 (*Apol.* i. 38), the bystanders at the cross are

and, as the author of *Supernatural Religion*, the work referred to above, observes, "Justin's works teem with these quotations." In the index to Otto's critical edition they number 281. It may be here remarked, that not one of these supplementary scraps is referred by Justin to the *Memoirs*.

It is thus evident that, whatever the *Memoirs* were, their contents were substantially coincident with the contents of the four Gospels. It is a necessary inference that, at the time when Justin wrote, there existed a well-established tradition respecting the life and teaching of Jesus ; for the *Memoirs*, he tells us, were read on Sundays in the churches, in city and country.<sup>1</sup> The period of his theological activity was from about A.D. 140 to A.D. 160. None will probably be disposed to question that as early, at least, as A.D. 135, which was some time after his conversion to Christianity, he was conversant with this gospel tradition, and knew that it was inculcated in the churches. The Jewish war of Barchochebas (A.D. 131 to 136), he says, was in his own time.<sup>2</sup> But that date (A.D. 135), to which the personal recollection of Justin on this subject extended, was only thirty-seven years after the accession of Trajan, — an event which preceded the death of the Apostle John at Ephesus.<sup>3</sup> If the date of Justin's acquaintance with the habitual teaching of the church respecting the life of Jesus were 1902, in the room of 135, the termination of the apostle's life would be set no farther back from us than 1865. Justin incidentally remarks, that many men and women sixty or seventy years old, who had been Christians from their youth, were to be found

said to have distorted their lips, — the thing predicted in Ps. xxii. 7 ; and in *Apol.*, i. 38, on the basis of several passages in the Psalms, they are said to have cried out, "He who raised the dead, let him save himself." In *Apol.*, i. 50, the disciples after the crucifixion are said to have fled from Christ, and denied him ; and in c. 106 (cf. c. 53) they are said to have repented of it after the resurrection ; the prophetic references being Zech. xiii. 7, and Isa. liii. 1-8. In *Dial.*, c. 35, Jesus is represented as predicting that "false apostles" (as well as false prophets) will arise. This is not presented as an instance of prophecy fulfilled ; but the same thing is found in Tertullian, *De Præsc. Hæret.*, c. 4, and in other writers. In *Dial.*, c. 51, Jesus predicts his reappearance at Jerusalem, and that he will eat and drink with his disciples, — a free paraphrase of Matt. xxvi. 29, and Luke xxii. 18. Not one of these passages in the context where it occurs would naturally lead the reader to presuppose any other source of them than the canonical Gospels.

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, ii. 22, 5 ; iii. 3, 4.

in the churches.<sup>1</sup> Many of his Christian contemporaries could remember as far back as the closing decades of the first century. Is it reasonable to believe that in the interval between John and Justin, in the organized Christian societies of Syria, Asia Minor, and Italy, with which Justin is considered to have been conversant, the established conception of the life of Jesus, of his doings and sayings, underwent an essential alteration?

Partly on the basis of the uncanonical passages in Justin, certain critics have contended that the mass of his quotations were derived from some other Gospel than the four; in particular, from the Gospel of the Hebrews, or from an apocryphal Gospel of Peter. There was an Aramaic gospel, commonly called "the Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was extensively used by Jewish Christians in Palestine and Syria. It is referred to by a number of the Fathers. Jerome translated it into Greek and Latin.<sup>2</sup> It came to be thought that it was the original of the Gospel of Matthew of which Papias speaks. Possibly this was true of it in its primitive form; for it underwent various modifications. In all its forms, however, it retained its affinity to our first Gospel. It is evident from the fragments that remain that the canonical Gospel is the original, and that the deviations from it in parallel texts in the Gospel of the Hebrews are of a later date. "The Aramaic fragments contain much that can be explained and understood only on the hypothesis that it is a recasting of the canonical text."<sup>3</sup> Respecting the Gospel of Peter, we have a statement, preserved in Eusebius, of Serapion, who was bishop of Antioch at the end of the second and beginning of the third century. He had found this book in use by some in the town of Rhossus in Cilicia. He had never heard of it before. It was tinged with the heresy of Docetism, although in the main orthodox. Eusebius<sup>4</sup> and Jerome<sup>5</sup> refer to it as an heretical book which no early teacher of the Church had made use of. A portion of this work, which was discovered in 1886-87, embraces a consecutive account of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. It is later than the canonical Gospels, John included,<sup>6</sup> and in a few instances varies from them. Justin in one passage<sup>7</sup> speaks of the change in Peter's name and the giving of the name Boanerges to James and John, his authority

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *De Vir. Ill.*, c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For an elaborate and critical discussion of the Gospel of the Hebrews in its different forms, see Zahn, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, II. 260 seq., and other passages, with the references to his *Gesch. d. Kanons d. N. T.* Also see Harnack, *Die Chronologie d. altchristl. Lit.*, I. p. 625 seq.

<sup>4</sup> Euseb., *H. E.*, iii. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *De Vir. Ill.*, i.

<sup>6</sup> Harnack now concurs in the opinion that this is probable. *Chronologie*, I. 474.

<sup>7</sup> *Apol.*, i. 35.

being "his [Peter's] Memoirs." This last incident is related only in the Gospel of Mark,<sup>1</sup> whose Gospel was connected by the ancient writers with Peter as its indirect source. A similar passage occurs in the rescued fragment of the Gospel of Peter. Harnack thinks it probable that Justin used this Gospel, and that he even included it in his Gospel *Memoirs*.<sup>2</sup> Schürer rightly judges that the evidence does not suffice for either part of this conclusion. "In the scantiness of the data," he remarks, "it is quite possible that Justin and the apocryphal Gospel, as to the passages in question, go back to a common source."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Sanday was disposed to think that Justin "used this new Gospel, but not largely." He adds that as a literary substratum, the canonical Gospels cover very nearly the whole ground which the apocryphal Gospel covers."<sup>4</sup> Dr. Chase (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. "Peter Simon,") agrees with Schürer. To the present writer the supposition of the use of it by Justin appears quite improbable, the supposition that he makes it one of his *Memoirs*, eminently so. See Chase's article. For other reasons for this judgment, see p. 251 of the present work.

Formerly certain critics were disposed to think that Justin drew the main portion of his quotations from the Jewish Christian Gospels. One reason for this contention was the character of the verbal deviations in these quotations from the text of the Gospels. This argument is destitute of force.

His quotations are not more inexact than those of other Fathers which are known to be derived from the canonical Gospels. In one of the most striking instances of inexact quotation (Matt. x. 27; cf. Luke x. 22) the same variations from the canonical text are found in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Irenæus.<sup>5</sup> In repeated instances, Justin attributes passages to one prophet which belong to another.<sup>6</sup> He quotes the Old Testament and heathen writers with the same sort of freedom. Where Justin varies from the Septuagint, he often varies in different places in the same manner. Hence uniformity of variation does not in the least warrant the inference of the use of other books than the Gospels. The main argument which is relied on to prove the non-canonical source of Justin's quotations is the alleged identity of some of them which deviate from the canonical text with quotations in the Clementine *Homilies*, which are assumed to be from a Hebrew gospel. The answer to this is conclusive. The author of the *Homilies* presents at least one passage which is undeniably from John. Of the five quotations on which the argument for identity of origin rests, it has

<sup>1</sup> iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronologie*, I. 474.

<sup>3</sup> *Theol. Lit. Zeitung*, 18 (1893), No. 2, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Inspiration*, pp. 310, 313.

<sup>5</sup> See Semisch, p. 367.

<sup>6</sup> *E.g. Apol.*, i. 53, where a passage in Isaiah is credited to Jeremiah.

been demonstrated that there is no such resemblance as the argument assumes to exist.<sup>1</sup> What can be the worth of reasoning which, were it valid, would compel us to hold that Jeremy Taylor drew his knowledge of the teachings and acts of Christ, not from the Gospels of the canon, but from a lost Ebionic document? Certain passages of Scripture are not unfrequently misquoted in the same way, owing to causes which in each case are readily explained. There are, so to speak, stereotyped errors of quotation. Another occasion of greater or less uniformity in verbal deviations from the text as we have it is the diversity of manuscripts. Attention to the ordinary operations of memory, and more familiarity with textual criticism, would have kept out untenable theories of the kind just reviewed.

Justin was a native of Palestine. He may have had some knowledge of the Gospel of the Hebrews, as other Fathers had. He may have read in it that Jesus made ploughs and yokes, and that a fire was kindled in the Jordan at his baptism, although this last tradition is differently given in that Gospel.<sup>2</sup> There is no proof, however, that he picked up these circumstances from any written source. They were probably afloat in oral tradition before they found their way into books. But there is decisive proof that the Gospel of the Hebrews was not one of the *Memoirs* which were his authoritative sources. That was a gospel of Judaic sectaries, and Justin was not an Ebionite. There is not a shadow of reason to suppose that the Gospel of the Hebrews was ever read in the churches which he must have had most prominently in mind. It is only necessary to observe how he describes the *Memoirs*, to be convinced that the Gospels of the canon are meant. He speaks of them as composed by "the apostles and their companions," and this he does in connection with a quotation which is found in Luke.<sup>3</sup> This accounts for his adding the term "companions" to his usual designation of these documents. This is the same mode of describing the Gospels which we find in Tertullian and in other later writers.<sup>4</sup> In one place, in the dialogue with Trypho, he calls them collectively "the Gospel,"—a term applied to the contents of the four, taken together, by Irenæus and Tertullian in the same century. He says, however,

<sup>1</sup> See Professor Ezra Abbot, *Critical Essays*, "Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," p. 103. Professor Abbot's exhaustive investigation has settled the question of the derivation of the passage in Justin on regeneration (*Apol.*, i. 61) from John iii. 3-5. Cf., on Justin and the Clementines, Westcott, *Hist. of the Canon*, p. 129 *seq.*, and note D, p. 155; Dr. E. A. Abbot, *Encycl. Britt.*, vol. x. p. 818. Hilgenfeld was convinced by Professor E. Abbot's essay that John was one of Justin's Gospels.

<sup>2</sup> See Nicholson, *The Gospel of the Hebrews*, etc., p. 40. The statement is found, for substance, in two ancient Latin Mss., and is perhaps alluded to by Juvenius, a Christian writer of the fourth century.

<sup>3</sup> *Dial.*, c. 103.

<sup>4</sup> See Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 2.



expressly that they are called "Gospels."<sup>1</sup> Apart from this explicit statement, it is preposterous to imagine that Justin can have one document only in mind in his references to the *Memoirs*. Was that document the joint production of the "apostles and their companions"? This would be a case of multiple authorship without a parallel in literature. We should have to hold that a gospel comprising in itself the contents of the four of the canon was read, in the middle of the second century, in the churches "in city and country," and was then, within a score of years, silently superseded by four Gospels of unknown authorship, among which its contents were distributed. The ancient document of established authority vanished as if by magic at the advent of these newcomers, among whom it was somehow partitioned! And this miraculous exchange, which took place when Irenæus was not far from thirty years old, occurred without his knowledge! Such an hypothesis is too heavy a tax on credulity. Scholars of all types of opinion are now disposed to accept the conclusion, which should never have been disputed, that Justin used all the Gospels of the canon; and it is safe to predict that there will be a like unanimity in the conviction that it is these alone which he designates as *Memoirs by the Apostles and their Companions*. "The manner," says Norton, "in which Justin speaks of the character and authority of the books to which he appeals, proves these books to have been the Gospels. They carried with them the authority of the apostles. They were those writings from which he and other Christians derived their knowledge of the history and doctrines of Christ. They were relied upon by him as primary and decisive evidence in his explanations of the character of Christianity. They were regarded as sacred books. They were read in the assemblies of Christians on the Lord's Day, in connection with the prophets of the Old Testament. Let us now consider the manner in which the Gospels were regarded by the contemporaries of Justin. Irenæus was in the vigor of life before Justin's death; and the same was true of many thousands of Christians living when Irenæus wrote. But he tells us that the four Gospels are the four pillars of the church, the foundation of Christian faith, written by those who had first orally preached the gospel, by two apostles and two companions of apostles. It is incredible that Irenæus and Justin should have spoken of different books." When "we find Irenæus, the contemporary of Justin, ascribing the same character, the same authority, and the same authors as are ascribed by Justin to the *Memoirs* quoted by him, which were called Gospels, there can be no reasonable doubt that the *Memoirs* of Justin were the Gospels of Irenæus."<sup>2</sup>

The proposition that Justin's *Memoirs* were the four Gospels is corroborated, if it stood in need of further support, by the fact

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Genuineness of the Gospels*, pp. 237, 239.

that Tatian, who had been his hearer, and speaks of him with admiration,<sup>1</sup> wrote a Harmony of the Four Gospels. Tatian is intermediate between Justin and Irenæus. He was born early in the second century and flourished as an author between A.D. 155 and 170. In his extant *Address to the Greeks* are passages evidently drawn from John's Gospel.<sup>2</sup> Eusebius says that, "having formed a certain combination and bringing-together of Gospels, — I know not how, — he has given this the title *Diatesseron*; that is, the gospel by the four," etc. The expression "I know not how" implies, not that Eusebius had not seen the book, but that the plan seemed strange to him.<sup>3</sup> It was not a harmony in the modern sense, but an amalgamation of passages from the Evangelists. At the beginning of the fifth century Theodoret tells us that he had found two hundred copies of the work in circulation, and had taken them away, substituting for them the four Gospels. A Syrian writer, Bar Salibi, in the twelfth century, had seen the work; he distinguishes it from another Harmony by Ammonius, and he testifies that it began with the words, "In the beginning was the Word." A commentary on this *Diatesseron*, Bar Salibi states, had been made in the fourth century by Ephraem Syrus. Up to a recent day, the character of the *Diatesseron* as a combination of the Four was persistently denied by the critics of the school of Baur. This criticism has been brought to an end not only by the discovery of two distinct Armenian versions of the *Commentary* of Ephraem, but also by the discovery of two copies of the Arabic version of the *Diatesseron* itself.<sup>4</sup> The composition of such a work, in which the four Gospels were partly compounded into one narrative, is an independent proof of the recognition which they enjoyed, and is an additional proof that the same Gospels constituted the *Memoirs* of Justin.

There were a few writings, not included in the canon, which were sometimes read in the early churches for purposes of edification; and some of these were held by some of the Fathers to have a certain claim to inspiration. In this list are embraced the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement of Rome, and the *Shepherd* of Hermas. A book of much less note, an Epistle of

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.*, iv. 29; Tatian, *Orat. ad. Græcos*, c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> cc. 4, 5, 13, 19.

<sup>3</sup> See Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> See Zahn's *Tatian's Diatesseron* (1881). Harnack assigns it to 172, "if not to 160-170." *Chronologie*, I., p. 722.

Soter, Bishop of Rome, is also said to have been sometimes read in churches; and there are some traces of a similar use of an *Apocalypse of Peter*, which Eusebius and Jerome brand as apocryphal. Not one of these books was a narrative. None of them ever had anything like the standing of the documents which recorded the facts in the public ministry of Christ, on which the very life of the Church depended. They were read in some of the churches for a time; but even Fathers who regard them with honor, as is seen in the example of Clement of Alexandria, do not hesitate to criticise their teaching.<sup>1</sup> The *Memoirs* of Justin were narratives, placed by all the churches on a level with the prophets of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> The gradual separation of the didactic writings whose titles have been given from the books of the canon does not in the least help us to comprehend how the documents referred to by Justin could have been expelled from the churches and perished out of sight.

It is sometimes imagined, if not asserted, that apocryphal Gospels were widely used in the churches of the second century, and enjoyed the esteem accorded to the four of the canon. This is a groundless impression.<sup>3</sup> The apocryphal Gospels which are now

<sup>1</sup> Clement (*Pæd.*, ii. 10, ed. Potter, p. 220) dissents from a statement of Barnabas (c. x.). Origen more definitely separates these writings from those which are authoritative. Yet at Alexandria there was a stronger tendency to accept writings of this class than existed elsewhere in the Church.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.*, i. 67.

<sup>3</sup> A concise, instructive account of the New Testament apocryphal literature is given by H. J. Holtzmann, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, ed. 3 (1892). He correctly characterizes them as "documents, almost all of which are distinguished from the canonical writings of the New Testament by the venturesomeness and tastelessness (*Abentheuerlichkeit und Geschmacklosigkeit*) of their contents, in great part also by their display of gnostic, sometimes, also, Jewish-Christian, or otherwise heretical color." Of the apocryphal Gospels, Holtzmann says: "Not even the gospel of the Hebrews and the gospel of Marcion in age go back of the canonical Gospels. Only by misunderstanding could the first be made the basis of Matthew, the second the basis of Luke. Much more is what we have said true of the writings still extant. As later products of pious fantasy by which merely the gaps in the Reports given by the Evangelists might be filled out, since they only include sections of the evangelical history, there was never any danger of their being put by the side of the four Gospels" (pp. 486, 487). The whole subject is thoroughly handled in the elaborate discussion by Zahn, *Geschichte d. N. T. Kanons*, vol. ii., pp. 621-797. R. Hofmann's article, in Hauck, *Realencycl. für. Prot. Theol. u. Kirche*, vol. i., is condensed and quite valuable.

extant, relating to the nativity and childhood of Jesus, and to the Virgin Mary, never pretended to be anything more than supplements to the received Gospels. They are of a much later date than the age of Justin. It has been thought that two or three of them existed in an earlier, rudimental form at that day.<sup>1</sup> Such was the opinion of Tischendorf. But even this is doubtful. The Gospel of the Hebrews (not the Hebrew St. Matthew), in its various redactions, had a wide acceptance among the different Jewish sects. But, this Gospel and Marcion's mutilated Luke excepted, there were no uncanonical gospel narratives which we have reason to think had any extensive circulation among professed Christians. There were no rivals of the *Memoirs* to which Justin referred. Numerous books were fabricated among heretical parties; but, though they might bear the name of "Gospels," they were generally of a didactic nature. This is the case with *The Gospel of the Truth*, which Irenæus and Tertullian inform us had been composed by the Valentinians. It is a powerful argument for the genuineness of the canonical Gospels, that the Gnostics are constantly charged with bolstering up their doctrines by perverse interpretation of the Gospels, but are not accused of bringing

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to state what apocryphal Gospels present a plausible claim to great antiquity.

The Protevangelium of James treats of the nativity of Mary. Origen refers to it by name (in *Matt.*, tom. x. 17, ed. Migne, vol. iii. p. 875); but it could not be the existing book that he used, as is shown by Professor Lipsius, *Dict. of Christ. Biogr.*, ii. 702. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, vii.) is thought to have referred to it. There is no proof that Justin (in *Dial.*, c. 78) borrowed from it. Says Professor Lipsius, "There is, indeed, no clear warrant for the existence of our present text of the Protevangelium prior to the time of Peter of Alexandria (311)." Gnostic and Ebionitic features are mingled in it.

The *Acta Pilati* forms the first part of the Gospel of Nicodemus. Justin (*Apol.*, i. 28, 36) refers to the Acts of Pilate, as does Tertullian (*Apol.*, 21; cf. 5). Both have in mind, probably, not any book, but an official report, which they assume to exist in the public archives at Rome. Eusebius (*H. E.*, ii. 2) refers to a blasphemous pagan forgery under this same title, which was of recent origin. The first trace of the present Acts of Pilate is in Epiphanius (A.D. 376), *Hær.*, 50, 1.

A Gospel of St. Thomas is referred to by Origen (*Hom. in Luc.*, i.). It was used by the Gnostic sects of Marcosians and Naassenes (Hippol., *Ref. Omn. Hær.*, v. 2; cf. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i. 20, 1). Portions of this book may exist in the extant Gospel of the same name. It relates to the boyhood of Christ.

forward narratives of their own at variance with them. On this subject Professor Norton remarks :—

“Irenæus and Tertullian were the two principal writers against the Gnostics ; and from their works it does not appear that the Valentinians, the Marcionites, or any other Gnostic sect, adduced, in support of their opinions, a single narrative relating to the public ministry of Christ, besides what is found in the Gospels. It does not appear that they ascribed to him a single sentence of any imaginable importance which the Evangelists have not transmitted. It does not appear that any sect appealed to the authority of any history of his public ministry besides the Gospels, except so far as the Marcionites, in their use of an imperfect copy of St. Luke’s Gospel, may be regarded as forming a verbal exception to this remark.”<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of the Valentinian *Gospel of Truth*, the reference to which is contained in a disputed passage of Tertullian, it is true, as Professor Norton states, that this Father “nowhere speaks of any apocryphal Gospel, or intimates a knowledge of the existence of such a book.”<sup>2</sup> In all the writers of the first three centuries, there are not more quotations professedly derived from apocryphal books called by them Gospels than can be counted on the fingers of one hand.<sup>3</sup> These citations in the Fathers, however, involve no sanction of the books from which they are taken. Clement of Alexandria quotes the Gospel of the Egyptians, but he quotes it to condemn it. If in the second century, as well as later, the Gospels of the canon were not the authorities from which the

<sup>1</sup> *Genuineness of the Gospels*, iii. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 227. Tertullian expressly states that Valentinus used all the four Gospels (*De Præscript. Hær.*, c.38). On the same sense of *videtur* in the passages, see Professor E. Abbot, *Critical Essays*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Origen once quotes a statement from the Gospel of Peter (*Comment. in Matt.*, tom. x. 462, 463). Clement of Alexandria twice refers to statements in the Gospel of the Egyptians (*Strom.*, iii. 9, 13). In the so-called II. Ep. of Clement of Rome are several passages thought to be from this Gospel, but the source is not named. See Lightfoot’s *Clement*, pp. 192, 193, 297 *seq.*, 311. Clement of Alexandria thrice (*Strom.*, ii. 9, iii. 4, vii. 13) cites passages from The Traditions, which was not improbably another name of the Gospel of Matthias.

Of these authors Pseudo-Clement is the only one who seems to attribute authority to the book to which he refers. The Gospel of the Egyptians was used by an ascetic sect, the Encratites (Clem. Alex., iii. 9). The Encratite tendencies of the Homily of Pseudo-Clement are noticed by Bishop Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome, Appendix*, p. 311.



Church derived its knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus, there is no known source whence that knowledge could have been obtained.

Celsus, the most distinguished literary opponent of Christianity in the second century, may be joined with the Gnostics as an indirect witness for the Gospels of the canon. He wrote, some have thought, as early as Marcus Antoninus (A.D. 138-161). Keim thinks that he composed his book under Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 178.<sup>1</sup> He had the Christian literature before him. He showed no lack of industry in searching out whatever could be made to tell against the Christian cause. As in the case of Justin, the gospel history can be constructed out of the passages cited from Celsus by Origen.<sup>2</sup> But there is not an incident or a saying which professes to be taken from Christian authorities that is not found in the canonical Gospels.<sup>3</sup> With all of these, as Keim allows,<sup>4</sup> he shows himself acquainted. Had there been apocryphal Gospels which had attained to a wide credence or circulation in the Church, even at a date thirty or forty years previous to the time when he wrote, this astute controversialist would have known something of them, and would have been likely to avail himself of the welcome aid to be derived from their inventions.

Passing by other proofs, we proceed to consider one testimony to the Gospels which carries us back into the company of immediate followers of Christ. It is that of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis. He is spoken of by Irenæus as "a man of the old time."<sup>5</sup> He was a contemporary of Polycarp,<sup>6</sup> who was born A.D. 69, and died A.D. 155. He had also known the daughters of Philip, — either the apostle, or (possibly) the evangelist.<sup>7</sup> He is said by Irenæus to have been a disciple of John the apostle; but a

<sup>1</sup> Keim, *Celsus' Wahres Wort*, p. 273. Zahn fixes the date at about A.D. 170 (*Einl. in d. N. T.*, II. 290); Harnack at A.D. 176-180 (*Chronologie*, I. 173).

<sup>2</sup> See the summaries of the work of Celsus, by Doddridge and Leland, in Lardner's *Credibility*, etc., ii. 27 *seq.*, and the work of Keim, as above.

<sup>3</sup> Origen (*Adv. Cel.*, ii. 74) says, "Now we have proved that many foolish assertions, opposed to the narratives of our Gospels, occur in the statements of the Jew" [in Celsus], etc. But these "foolish assertions," as an inspection of the previous portion of Origen's work demonstrates, are comments on the gospel history, not pretending to come from any Gospels.

<sup>4</sup> p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Irenæus, l. c.

<sup>5</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, v. 33, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 39.

doubt is cast on the correctness of this statement by Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, this is certain, that he knew Aristion, and one whom he designates "the Presbyter [or Elder] John," — whom he calls "disciples of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> These may have formed a part of a company of apostles and their followers who left Palestine for Asia Minor about A.D. 67, on the outbreak of the Jewish war. In the passages which Eusebius has preserved from Papias, he speaks only of the two Evangelists, Mark and Matthew. The silence of Eusebius, however, as to any mention of the third and fourth Gospels by Papias, has been demonstrated not to imply, in the least, that these Gospels were not referred to and used by him.<sup>3</sup> The avowed purpose of Eusebius in these notices, and his practice in other similar cases, would not lead us to expect any allusion to what Papias might say of the other Gospels, unless it were something new, or of special interest. Now, Papias was informed by "the Elder" John, that Mark was the "interpreter" of Peter,<sup>4</sup> and wrote down accurately what he heard Peter relate of the sayings and doings of Jesus. The same statement respecting the relation of Mark to Peter, and the origin of the second Gospel, is made by Clement of Alexandria,<sup>5</sup> Irenæus,<sup>6</sup> and Tertullian.<sup>7</sup> It was the undisputed belief of the ancient Church. It is borne out by the internal traits of Mark's Gospel.<sup>8</sup> It has been maintained by some that a primitive Mark, of which the Gospel of the canon is an expansion, is the work referred to. On what is this theory founded? First, on the statement in Papias, that Mark, though he omitted nothing that he heard, but reported it accurately, was precluded from recording "in order" (ἐν τάξει) the matter thus derived from the oral addresses of Peter. But this remark may be founded on a comparison of Mark with Matthew, where the sayings of Christ are often differently disposed; or, perhaps, with Luke, who specially aimed at an orderly arrangement; or, possibly, as Lightfoot thinks, with John, where the sequence of events

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, l. c.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> The meaning is not that Mark translated Peter's Aramaic into Greek (or Latin), but did the work of an intermediary, conveying to his readers what he had heard from Peter. See Meyer, *Ev. Markus* (ed. Weiss), p. 2; and Zahn, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, 218 seq.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, ii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. Hæc.*, iii. 10, 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 5.

<sup>8</sup> See B. Weiss, *Marcusevangelium*, *Einl.*, p. 2.

is more carefully preserved.<sup>1</sup> But it may be nothing more than a subjective impression of Papias or of his informant. It would seem improbable that any other Mark could have existed in the time of Papias and Polycarp, and have been silently superseded by the Gospel of the canon, without any knowledge of the fact reaching Irenæus and his contemporaries. The second reason given for the conjecture respecting an earlier Gospel of Mark is founded on a certain hypothesis as to the relation of the synoptical Gospels to one another, and to the authorship of the first of them. The hypothesis is that Matthew's authorship extended only to the compilation of the discourses of Jesus, and that the narrative portion of his Gospel is from another hand. Papias states that "Matthew wrote the oracles (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he could." It is in another place that Papias, whether following the same or a different authority, says of the Evangelist Mark, that, in setting down what he had heard from Peter, he wrote accurately whatever he remembered, but did not record in order what was either said or done by Christ, and that he did not design to give a connected account of the Lord's "Logia" (λογίων or λόγων).<sup>2</sup> Since Schleiermacher, the theory has been widely accepted by the German critics that under the term *Logia* Papias means exclusively *teachings* of Jesus. The first Gospel in its present form is conceived to be dependent on the second for its narrative matter; yet the reverse is supposed to be true respecting certain passages in the two Gospels. Hence the inference concerning these passages in Mark that they are of a later date than the body of its contents. But, in the first place, as Lightfoot has shown, it is quite possible that Papias by *Logia* designates the *entire* Gospel in its present form.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, it is quite possible, as Hilgenfeld has thought, and as Zahn maintains, that Papias speaks only of *sayings* of Christ in Matthew, because it was with these that he was specially concerned in his own book, the *Exposition*.<sup>4</sup> If Papias regarded the canonical Gospel as only in part the work of Matthew, would he not have

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, pp. 165, 205. "Per ordinem profitetur," says the Muratorian Fragment, after referring to Mark in terms like those used by Papias.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, H. E., iii. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Essays on Sup. Relig.*, p. 173 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Hilgenfeld, *Einl.*, pp. 54 *seq.*, 456 *seq.* (Lightfoot, *ibid.*, p. 172); Zahn, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, II.

stated who was the *second* author? Thirdly, as Weiss and others think, if *Logia* in Papias means "discourses," the first Gospel may, and indeed must, have included, as a subordinate element, narrative memoranda connected with them.<sup>1</sup> The language of Papias distinctly implies that it was no longer necessary to translate the Aramaic Matthew into Greek. His use of the aorist implies that that necessity had passed by. Zahn is justified in declaring that if critics must assume a lost primitive Matthew, made up of discourses of Jesus, they must rest the case on internal grounds, instead of building it on the testimony of Papias.<sup>2</sup> If our present Matthew is the primitive document amplified, still the later author stands, as regards authority and credibility, on a level with the second and third Evangelists. The *date* of the completed Gospel is proved by internal evidence to coincide very nearly with that of the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).<sup>3</sup>

Although the statements cited by Eusebius from Papias relate not to Luke, but to Mark and Matthew, it happens that there is nearly contemporary evidence of striking value respecting the existence and authority of the third Gospel. Marcion came from Asia Minor to Rome about A.D. 140.<sup>4</sup> His heresy involved a rejection of the apostles, with the exception of Paul, for the reason that he deemed them tainted with Judaic error. The Fathers who oppose Marcion describe him as having rejected the Gospels, with the exception of Luke. He did not deny that the other Gospels were genuine productions of their reputed authors (there is no hint that he did) ; but he selected Luke as his authority, he having

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Matthäusevangel.*, Einl., p. 17 seq., *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 465 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesch. d. N. T. Kanons*, I. ii. s. 892.

<sup>3</sup> Weiss sets the date of Mark just before A.D. 70 ("in das Ende d. sechziger Jahren"), *Einl. in d. N. T.*, s. 496; of the primitive Matthew, just before the destruction of Jerusalem (*ibid.*, s. 514); of the present Matthew, very soon after; of Luke's Gospel, not later than A.D. 80 (*ibid.*, s. 531). Harnack assigns to Mark the date A.D. 65-67, to Matthew, A.D. 70-75 (*Chronologie*, s. 654). Harnack interprets Papias as referring to earlier written Greek recensions of a (probably Hebrew) Matthew, one of which was the recognized Greek edition prior to Papias (c. A.D. 150, *ibid.*, 693). Harnack holds to later additions to the primitive Matthew. The composition of a Hebrew Gospel by the apostle Matthew, which is a common source of Matthew and Luke, Harnack admits to be possible, but not assured. He rejects the theory of a mere collection of discourses (s. 694, note). He assigns A.D. 78-93 as the date of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (s. 250, s. 718).

<sup>4</sup> See Justin, *Apol.*, i. 26, 58.

been an associate of Paul, and made a gospel for himself by cutting out of Luke's work passages which he considered incongruous with his doctrinal theories.<sup>1</sup> That Marcion's gospel was an abridgment of our Luke is now conceded on all hands. Dr. Sanday has not only demonstrated this by a linguistic argument, but has proved by a comparison of texts that the gospel of the canon must have been for some time in use, and have attained to a considerable circulation, before Marcion applied to it his pruning-knife.<sup>2</sup> There is no reason to doubt that he took for his purpose a gospel of established authority in the Church.

But we have the unimpeachable testimony of the author of the third Gospel as to the sources of his knowledge. In the prologue he states that his information was derived from the immediate disciples of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Unless the author who collected and preserved such passages of the Saviour's teaching as the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, and as the story of the Pharisee and the Publican, lied, his informants were immediate followers of Jesus. His sources were in part writings and doubtless in part oral communications. Moreover, the book of Acts undoubtedly has a common authorship with the Gospel. In the Acts, the author discloses himself in an artless and incidental way, as having been a companion of the apostle Paul in a part of his journeying. That this author was Luke is attested by the unvarying tradition of antiquity. No other explanation of the passages in which the writer speaks in the first person plural<sup>4</sup> is satisfactory. That as practised a writer as the author of these two books undeniably was introduced quotations from another so carelessly is quite improbable. For a later writer to take up these quotations, and, still more, to assimilate them to his own style, still retaining the "we," would be a flagrant attempt at imposture.<sup>5</sup> Had a later writer wished to cozen his readers into a belief that he had been an attendant of Paul, he would not have failed to make his pretension more prominent. The literary discernment of Renan on a question of this nature, which stands apart from any theological

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hæc.*, c. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gospels in the Second Century*, ch. viii. The priority of Luke to Marcion's gospel is admitted in the seventh edition of *Supernatural Religion*.

<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xvi. 10-19, xx. 5-xxviii. 31.

<sup>5</sup> This intention was attributed to the author by leaders of the Tübingen School, as it is in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. "Acts of the Apostles."



idea, is not to be lightly esteemed. "The author of this gospel [Luke] is certainly the same as the author of the Acts of the Apostles."<sup>1</sup> "The book [of Acts] has a perfect unity of composition (*redaction*), and it is this which decides us to attribute it to the personage who says 'we' (*ἡμεῖς*) from xvi. 4. For to admit that this 'we' comes from a document inserted by the author in his narrative is in the highest degree (*souverainement*) improbable. The examples which they cite of such a negligence pertain to books of no literary worth, well-nigh undigested; but the Acts is a book composed with a great deal of skill (*beaucoup d'art*). The favorite expressions where the 'we' occurs are the same as those of the rest of the Acts and of the third Gospel."<sup>2</sup> To conclude, there is the same consensus in the tradition respecting the association of Luke with Paul that we find with regard to the connection of Mark with Peter.<sup>3</sup>

The evidence, the most important points of which have been sketched above, establishes the essential genuineness of the first three Gospels. We have, however, within these Gospels themselves, indirect proofs of their early date of a convincing character. The most important of these internal evidences is the form of the eschatological discourse of Jesus. In Matthew especially, but also in the other synoptical Gospels, the second advent of Christ is set in close connection with the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Most candid scholars at present prefer the hypothesis that the reports of the Lord's Discourse — which, it must be remembered, are translations of it into Greek, and in an abridged form — are colored by a subjective anticipation of the disciples, the result of their own thoughts and yearnings with regard to a point left indefinite in the Lord's prophetic teaching, the design of which was to afford glimpses of grand turning-points in the development of his kingdom. "If Christ," says Neander, "pointed forward to the great effective forces or steps involved in his coming in the world's history, his victorious self-revelation, bringing in his

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, 16<sup>me</sup> ed., p. xlix. The author of both works is "bien réellement Luc, disciple de Paul." *Les Apôtres*, p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Évangiles* (1877), p. 436, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, iv. 2; cf. Ep. to Philemon, ver. 24; Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11. For further remarks on the relation of Luke to the Gospel and the Acts, see Appendix, Note 12.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxiv. 29, 34; Mark xiii. 19, 24, 30; Luke xxi. 32.

kingdom, he meant thereby in part his triumph in the fall of the previous sensuous form of the theocracy, and in the more free and mighty spread of this kingdom, to be secured by it, and in part his last coming for the consummation of his kingdom. He had in view the judgment of the degenerate theocracy, and that final judgment, — the one being the first more free and mighty development of the kingdom of God, the other its final consummation; both being regarded by him as events corresponding one to the other, — just as in general, in the great epochs in the world's history, God reveals himself, sitting in judgment on a creation ripe for its downfall, and calling a new creation into being. Of this character are the critical and creative epochs of the world's history, having relation one to another; while collectively they prefigure that epoch when the judgment is completed, and with it the creation of the divine kingdom. . . . It is easy to understand how it might happen that in apprehending and reproducing such discourses of Jesus, from the standpoint of the hearers, the successive epochs or stages which Christ exhibited in a certain correspondence with one another, and which, although he did not designate measures of time, he kept more apart, should become mingled with one another." Weiss is constrained to concede such a dislocation in the case of Matt. xxiv. 35. It is generally conceded, that in the *Logia* of Matthew there are clear examples of a grouping together of utterances of Jesus on separate occasions. The Sermon on the Mount is an illustration. That the synoptical reports of the Prophetic Discourse should exhibit traces of the feeling, spontaneous in its origin, that the Return of Christ was to be soon, is a plausible supposition. We cannot be sure, from anything recorded in the Gospels, that Jesus spoke explicitly of the fall of Jerusalem as a "coming" on his part. But this term was used by him not always in reference to the same event. In the fourteenth chapter of John, in the third verse, it is held by both Meyer and Weiss that the "Coming" of which Jesus speaks is the Parousia, while in the eighteenth verse, the "Coming" of which mention is made is held by Meyer to refer to the mission of the Comforter, or Paraclete, — by Weiss, to the Resurrection; and Weiss concedes that in the twenty-third verse the "Coming" refers to the spiritual communion into which he was to enter with the disciples. Here, then, in a single chapter of John, the "Coming" of Jesus is applied to three distinct

manifestations of himself. That a misconception of the meaning of Christ on the subject was possible on the part of disciples is shown by an example in John xxi. 23. That Jesus did not foretell his advent to judgment as an event to follow immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem is shown by the parable of the Marriage Feast, in Matt. xxii., and by the parable of the Householder (Matt. xxi. 33-42), unless it is assumed that the reports of these parables are here given in a later, expanded form. The same conclusion is distinctly indicated in the parables of the Mustard-seed and the Leaven, not to speak of other teaching of like purport. The legislation in the Sermon on the Mount appears to be in its tone inconsistent with the idea of a sudden and speedy advent to judgment. Jesus is said to have declared that he did not himself know when it would occur. "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. xxiv. 36). Of course it is possible to interpret "day and hour" with strict literalness. Under this interpretation, the passage would prove nothing to our purpose. But at another time, after the Resurrection, when he was asked if he was at once to restore the kingdom to Israel, he answered that the question related to a secret of the Almighty: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority" (Acts i. 7). They were to carry their testimony, he added, "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Here we see the eagerness of the disciples for the consummation of the kingdom, side by side with the assurance of Christ that the date when their hopes would be realized was an unknown, unrevealed fact in the divine administration. At the same time, it will not be questioned by the soundest interpreters, that, had any considerable interval elapsed between the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70, and the composition of the synoptical Gospels, other phraseology would have been used by the Evangelists, or at least some explanation thrown in respecting the chronological relation of that event to the advent to judgment. We have, therefore, in the passages referred to, satisfactory evidence that the first three Gospels were in existence, if not before, at least very soon after, A.D. 70. And the same reasoning proves that they existed in their present form and compass. The eschatological discourse in Matthew, for example, is homogeneous in style with the rest of the Gospel; and, in any revision later than

the date given above, these perplexing statements would not have been left unaltered or unexplained.

Besides the eschatological discourse, there are many passages in the first three Gospels, sayings and occurrences, which imply the state of things which preceded the fall of Jerusalem and did not exist afterward.<sup>1</sup> The Gospels have a vocabulary — and in this particular the fourth is included — which is characteristic of them, as distinguished from the Epistles and the rest of the New Testament. One example is the use in the Gospels of the term “Son of man.” Another example is the use of Christ, not as a proper name, but as signifying the Messiah. The term “church,” so frequent later in the New Testament, is found in the Gospels only in two places in Matthew. Questions pertaining to Church officers and ecclesiastical controversies and customs are wholly absent from the Gospels. The atmosphere in these narratives is quite different. It belongs to an earlier time.

The long and searching inquiry on the question of the origin and mutual relations of the first three Gospels has not been without substantial results. The great influence of an oral tradition which shaped itself at Jerusalem, where the apostles remained for years, and whose repetition of the Lord's sayings and acts would tend to acquire a fixed form, is now generally acknowledged. The independence of Mark in relation to the other Evangelists is an assured fact. The priority of Mark in respect to date of composition, if not so unanimously accepted, is favored by a large body of learned scholars. Leading English critics are disposed to claim for the oral tradition a larger agency in accounting for the resemblances of the Synoptists to one another than German critics consider it possible to assume. Westcott favors the hypothesis that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Aramaic ; that the Aramaic oral tradition which he took up had its contemporaneous parallel in a Greek oral tradition ; that, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Aramaic Gospel was not exactly rendered into Greek, but its contents exchanged for the Greek oral counterpart ; that the disciple who thus transferred the Aramaic first Gospel of Matthew into Greek added here and there certain historical memoranda. In this way he would account for the resemblances of the matter contained in the Synoptists.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For good remarks under this head see Sanday, *Inspiration* (Bampton Lectures, 1893), p. 284 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *Introduction to the Gospels*, pp. 213, 214, 231 n.

Weiss, in common with most critics of the German school, of whom he is one of the most eminent, holds that the peculiarities of the Synoptists cannot be explained by the influence of oral tradition alone. We must assume an interdependence. His view is, that the oldest Gospel was an Aramaic writing of Matthew, composed mainly, but not exclusively, of discourses of Christ, arranged in groups; that this was rendered into Greek; that, immediately after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, it was amplified by historical matter, drawn mainly from Mark,—the second Gospel having been previously written, as the ecclesiastical tradition affirms, by the same Mark who had attended Barnabas and Paul, and who afterward was a companion of Peter; that the third Gospel was composed by Luke, the companion of Paul, who, in addition to other sources of information, written and oral, made use of the oldest document, the writing of Matthew, and the narrative of Mark; that Luke's Gospel was composed not much later than the "first decennium after A.D. 70."<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing statements it will be seen how small, comparatively, is the divergence of the different schools of judicious critics, so far as their conclusions have a bearing on these essential points connected with the historical evidences of Christianity. The early formation, under the eyes and by the agency of the immediate disciples of Jesus, of an oral narrative of his sayings and of the events of his life; its wide diffusion; its incorporation into the second Gospel, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, by an author who had listened to Peter; the authorship of the basis, at least, of the first Gospel by the Apostle Matthew; the completion of the first Gospel in its present compass not far from the date of the fall of the city and the consequent dispersion of the Christians, who fled at the coming of the Romans; the composition of Luke by a Christian writer who had access to immediate testimony, as well as to writings in which this testimony had been set down by disciples situated like himself,—these are facts which erudite and candid scholars, both German and English, whose researches entitle them to speak with confidence, unite in affirming.

A few words may be said upon the integrity of the Gospels. The guarantee of this is the essential agreement of the existing manuscripts, which would not be possible had the early texts been

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, B. i. 24–84. Weiss thinks also that some traces of the primitive Matthew appear in Mark.



tampered with. Renan speaks of the little authority which the texts of the Gospels had for about a "hundred years"; in his first edition he wrote "a hundred and fifty." "They had no scruple," he adds, "about inserting in them paragraphs combining the narratives diversely, or completing some by others. The poor man who has but one book, wishes it to contain everything that comes home to his heart. They lent these little rolls to one another. Every one transcribed on the margin of his copy the words, the parables, which he found elsewhere, and which moved him."<sup>1</sup> There is a foundation for these statements, but they are exaggerated. There is no proof that the Gospels were treated with this degree of license. Had they been so treated, the differences consequent must have perpetuated themselves in the copies derived from the early texts. With regard to Renan's solitary example of an insertion of any length, — John viii. 1-11 (he might have added one more, Mark xvi. 9-20), — these passages are doubted, or rejected from the text, by scholars, mainly on this very ground of a lack of manuscript attestation. No doubt, here and there marginal annotations, made for liturgical purposes, or from some other innocent motive, have crept into the text. The close of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 13) — "For thine is the kingdom," etc. — is such an addition. In the second century the diversities in the copies of the canonical Gospels were considerable.<sup>2</sup> It is the business of textual criticism to ascertain what readings are to be preferred. The statement that the early Christians felt no interest whatever in keeping the text of the Gospels intact is unfounded.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed., p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> See Westcott's *History of the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 149 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Other statements, in the same connection, have even less foundation. "They attached little importance," says Renan, "to these writings," — Gospels; "and the collectors (conservateurs), such as Papias, in the first half of the second century, still preferred to them the oral tradition." On the contrary, the work of Papias was itself a commentary on the Gospels, or on portions of them. In his remarks about his esteem of oral tradition, he is not comparing the Gospels with other sources of information, but probably refers to anecdotes respecting them and their authors which he interwove in his comments, and which he preferred to derive from oral sources. See Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 39. Renan's reference to Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, iii. cc. 2, 3) proves nothing to the purpose. It contains no hint of a preference of tradition to the Gospels. Renan further says, "Besides the Gospels that have reached us, there were others" — in his first edition he wrote "a multitude of others" — "pretending equally to represent the tradition of eye-witnesses." How

## NOTE

The question of the authorship of the third Gospel is involved in that of the authorship of the book of Acts. Moreover, so much is said at present respecting the authorship of the Acts and the credibility of its contents, that, on this account also, these topics deserve special notice. The unvarying tradition of the Church ascribes both books to Luke—the same Luke whom the apostle Paul styles as one of his fellow-laborers,<sup>1</sup> and refers to as the beloved physician,<sup>2</sup> and who is spoken of in the Second Epistle to Timothy as the only companion of the apostle at the time this Epistle was written. It has already been remarked, that no interpretation of the “we passages” in the Acts is probable which does not regard them as a record of personal observations of the author of the book.

The principal basis of the impeachment of the genuineness of the Acts is the alleged improbability of a portion of its historic contents. The theory that the book was composed late with the intent to pacify the contention of Petrine and Pauline factions in the early Church is so nearly obsolete, the existence of such a rupture and antagonism being itself a fiction, that a bare allusion to it is all that is required at present. Whatever similarity is found in the acts and fortunes which the narrative assigns severally to the two apostles, it is only what might be expected if they were both active in the same work in different fields,—which, as the apostle Paul himself states, was the fact.<sup>3</sup> If the author of the Acts felt an interest in this parallelism, or even if he selected events illustrating it, the resemblance is naturally accounted for.

None of the histories in the New Testament has called out in a greater degree than the Acts the criticism inspired by suspicion, which, as Lightfoot has said, is not more sensible when applied to historical writers than when applied to one's neighbors. The omission to set down incidents of which we are informed else-

little warrant there is for this statement respecting apocryphal Gospels, and how erroneous is the impression which it conveys, have been shown in preceding pages of this chapter. The “many” writings to whom Luke refers in his prologue were soon superseded, and passed away. There is no proof that any one of them had a wide circulation. There were left no competitors with the Gospels of the canon, and none arose.

<sup>1</sup> Philemon, vs. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 7, 8.

where — the precarious argument from silence — has been made the basis of quite unwarranted inferences in dealing with this book. Whatever may be true as to alleged inaccuracies in Luke's narrative, archæology, in numerous instances, confirms its correctness in a striking way. Lightfoot, who is not inclined to exaggerate, says of the Acts of the Apostles, "In the multiplicity and variety of its details it probably affords greater means of testing its general character for truth than any other ancient narrative in existence ; and in my opinion it satisfies the tests fully."<sup>1</sup> Much has been said of certain discrepancies which are said to exist between the Acts and the Pauline Epistles. This implies what, aside from this allegation, is obviously true, that the narrative is not framed on the basis of the Epistles, but quite independently. The *Horæ Paulinæ* of Paley, the most original of his apologetic works, presents, in a convincing way, undesigned coincidences which verify statements in the Acts, and so far the trustworthiness of the author. As regards accuracy, the distinction must be kept in mind between the earlier portion of the book and the later portions. For the earlier chapters the sources of information, although they included written statements, were indirect and in part oral, so that a less degree of precision here and there might be expected. Lightfoot's observation is especially true of the later chapters. Of the difference between these and the earlier, Professor Ramsay observes : —

"In the later chapters there are few sentences that do not afford some test of their accuracy by mentioning external facts of life, history, and antiquities. But the earlier chapters contain comparatively few such details."<sup>2</sup> The author had means of knowing the later events with perfect accuracy (so far as perfection can be attained in history), but the means which helped him there, and the scene and surroundings, were to him strange and remote."<sup>3</sup> "We discern the same guiding hand and mind, the same clear historical insight seizing the great and critical steps ; but the description of the primitive church wants precision in the outline and color in the details."<sup>4</sup> "Luke was dependent here on informal narratives and on oral traditions."

Of the first chapters in the Acts, a most competent American scholar,

<sup>1</sup> Apt illustrations follow this statement, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, p. 105; *St. Paul and the Three*.

<sup>2</sup> *St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

the late Professor J. Henry Thayer, remarks: "The writer is honestly endeavoring to record facts and truths," according to the information he had received. "On any sensible view the discrepancies are of no great account except as evidence of independence, and of substantial trustworthiness."<sup>1</sup>

There are characteristics of style in Luke that should be taken into account, which, however, must not be confounded with important — much less intentional — error. An occasional hyperbole is not a serious offence in an author. An instance is the reference, in words ascribed to James, to the tens of thousands — "myriads" — of Jewish believers present at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 20). Another example is the statement relative to the giving up of private ownership, as if it were universal (Acts iv. 32, 34), — a statement which subsequent passages in the Acts incidentally restrict (*e.g.* Acts xii. 12). The author's pen was not that of a statistician. There are not wanting, however, cases where the narrative is made graphic by explanatory details woven into it. Thus (in Acts iv. 15, 16) we read that the Jewish rulers, after having arraigned Peter and John, put their heads together, as a present-day writer might say, and agreed that a miracle had without doubt been wrought, and that, as they could not deny it, they could do nothing but silence the apostles with threats. A conference, such as their proceeding was conceived to imply, is introduced, as if it were an ascertained fact (Acts iv. 15-17). So it may have been; yet it may be an inference due to Luke's informants, which it would have been more accurate in them to state less positively, as a probable supposition. In the account of the speaking with tongues (Acts ii.), the amazed people connect with the question "How hear we in our own language" an enumeration of all the many regions from which they had come. This is an expanded paraphrase of exclamations of the excited throng. Our confidence in Luke is confirmed by his insertion of the same event with variations of detail. He felt bound no more than any other author to bind himself to an identity in phraseology. But it is necessary in certain instances to presuppose a difference of sources. Luke takes no pains to harmonize the details. The most striking instance is the three accounts of the conversion of the apostle Paul (Acts xx., xxii., xxvi.). Here the apostle's own account addressed to Agrippa (ch. xxvi.) is to be regarded, of

<sup>1</sup> From *The Congregationalist*, July 6, 1901.

course, as of primary value. The extended speeches in the Acts are generally, as concerns their phraseology, a composition of the author. The ancient writers, as all scholars know, were in the habit of throwing into the direct form—the *oratio recta*—or the form of quotation, what a modern writer presents in form, as well as in fact, in his own language.<sup>1</sup> They are, doubtless, in some instances abbreviated, or given for substance merely. Yet there is no reason to regard them with distrust; on the contrary, they often have an obvious verisimilitude which speaks for the fidelity of the report. This is eminently true, to mention one instance, of the discourse of Paul at Athens. Much has been made of a supposed anachronism in the speech attributed to Gamaliel (Acts v. 34 *seq.*). He is represented to have appealed to the example (among others) of the abortive sedition of Theudas, which, if Josephus is right, occurred later than the date of Gamaliel's speech. On this passage Neander says:—

“It is very possible that at different times two persons named Theudas raised a sedition among the Jews, as the name was by no means uncommon. . . . It is also possible that Luke, in the relation of the event which he had before him, found the example of Theudas adduced as something analogous, or that one name has happened to be substituted for another. In either case it is of little importance.”<sup>2</sup>

Neander's comment illustrates the spirit of sound historical criticism. It is in sharp contrast with the superficial habit of not a few critics, whose method, if followed, would discredit most historical writings.

The idea (in Acts ii.) of what the speaking with tongues in the churches was, is said to be a misinterpretation which could not have been entertained by a companion of the apostle Paul. According to the apostle it was the excited utterance of inarticulate sounds which only those made competent by a gift of the Spirit could interpret.<sup>3</sup> But in the Acts, the speaking with tongues at Pentecost is represented as speaking in foreign languages. But a mistake respecting the nature of the phenomenon as it appeared

<sup>1</sup> A special, instructive discussion, by Tholuck, of the speeches of Paul in the Acts is in the *Stud. u. Kritik*, (1839, II.).

<sup>2</sup> Neander, *Planting and Training of the Church* (ed. Robinson), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> I Corinthians xii. 10 *seq.*, xiv. 1 *seq.*



in the apostolic churches would be as difficult to account for, were it made by any other to whom the book of Acts could reasonably be ascribed as by its reputed author. By some of the exegetes the passage is understood to signify that the miracle consisted not in *speaking* but in the *hearing* — which is the term used in the text. Wendt, who adopts this view, suggests that the utterances were probably distinct from any existing language, and yet such as to open the way for the miraculous comprehension of their import.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the account in Luke was current as a popular tradition. Professor Thayer takes this view.<sup>2</sup> "The writer" [Luke], he says, "is honestly endeavoring to record facts and truths. Even when he obviously labors under misapprehension, as in the case of the gift of tongues (ii. 5 *seq.*), he gives the story as he doubtless received it (compare Mark xvi. 17) without attempting to remove its obvious incongruities," etc. Professor Ramsay also writes of Acts ii. 5-11, that a "popular tale seems to obtrude itself. In these verses, the power of speaking with tongues . . . is taken in the sense of speaking in many languages. Here again we observe the distorting influence of popular fancy."<sup>3</sup>

The principal allegation adverse to the trustworthiness, and so to the accepted view, of the genuineness, of the Acts is that of an inconsistency of the account of the apostolic conference or council (in Acts xv.) with the apostle Paul's own statement (in Gal. ii.) as to his relations to the other apostles and to the Jewish Christians generally. Paul, in this place, relates only a private interview, but his language implies that there was, besides, a public conference. There is no contradiction here. That the three apostles, Peter, James, and John, after hearing him describe his evangelic work and its fruits, gave him the right hand of fellowship and bade him God-speed in his mission to the Gentiles he emphatically asserts. Nor is there any inconsistency between his statement that they "added" or "imparted" nothing to him — that is, in the way of supplement or criticism — and the prescriptions which were sent, according to Acts xv., to the Gentile churches in the neighboring region. The one thing insisted upon by Paul, that the Gentile believers should not be required to be

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Apostelgeschichte*, *ad loc.* That there was a speaking of foreign languages is not confirmed by the phraseology in Acts x. 47, xi. 15, 17, xix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> As cited above.

<sup>3</sup> *St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, p. 370.

circumcised, was settled according to his mind. This was the question respecting which the conference was held. The requirements or requests which were sent forth contained nothing at variance with any teaching of the apostle Paul concerning what was right and proper to be done or to be left undone by Gentile converts who lived in the midst of Jewish believers. It was a *modus vivendi* for the two classes of Christians, a provision for securing cordial recognition as fellow-Christians from those who kept up the observances of the Mosaic laws — observances, so far as born Jews were concerned, which the apostle Paul countenanced. It was understood that Peter's special mission was to be to the Jews — to "the circumcision" — and Paul's to the Gentiles. At a later day, when Paul had planted the Gospel far beyond the limits of "Syria and Cilicia," and was giving counsel to churches principally made up of Gentiles, his omission to make formal reference to the letter of the council or to consider it, under the circumstances, applicable, requires no explanation or defence. Yet the counsel which he gave, even then, was substantially in accord with its terms. In making his collection for the poor at Jerusalem he made no reference in his Epistles to the agreement which he had made with the other apostles to do so. It was still quite possible that James should continue to regard the letter as defining what was to be generally expected of the Gentiles (Acts xxi. 25). The fault which the apostle Paul found with Peter at Antioch was not that Peter differed from him in principle, but that he was unfaithful to his own convictions, and by departing from the liberal course which he had before pursued was likely to make a misleading impression on the Gentile believers. The idea of some critics that Paul at Antioch had converted Peter to his own liberal view, and that, therefore, the entire narrative (in Acts x. 1 *seq.*) of the connection of Peter with Cornelius is unhistorical, has no foundation. Such a transaction as that described in Acts x. 1 *seq.* enables us to explain Peter's preparation of mind for the catholic course taken by him subsequently. The imagined "enlightenment" of Peter by persuasions of Paul at Antioch is without a grain of historic evidence to rest upon. If the events described in the story of Peter and Cornelius, of which we are furnished with so detailed an account, are discredited, it is a remarkable instance of the "lie circumstantial." As to the demand then made at Antioch by zealous Jewish Christians from

Jerusalem, — whether or not they were in accord with a feeling of James we cannot be sure, — it did not clash with the concessions which James had made at the council, for these did not touch on the question whether Jewish believers should go so far in fraternizing with the Gentiles as to disregard the traditional prohibitions to eat with the uncircumcised, even though they were acknowledged as Christian brethren and were even loved as such. If the apostle Paul was disposed to take a broader view of the spirit of the Jerusalem missive, it was a difference of interpretation which might naturally arise between two men so unlike in their natural qualities. The refusal of Paul to circumcise Titus has been made an argument to disprove the historical truth of the account in Acts of the circumcision of Timothy (Acts xvi. 1-4). It is said that Paul would not have done at one time what he absolutely refused to do at another. But why did he refuse to circumcise Titus? First, because he was a heathen by birth, and secondly, because his circumcision was demanded on doctrinal grounds, so that to yield would have been to give up at once the rights of the Gentiles and the truth of justification by faith. But Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother, and "all knew that his father was a Greek," and he was circumcised for a totally different reason from that for which the circumcision of Titus was demanded. Timothy was circumcised out of respect to unconverted Jews, not converted judaizers. His circumcision neither imperilled the freedom of the Gentiles, nor conflicted with the doctrine of justification. In this act Paul simply made himself "a Jew unto the Jew." That is, he followed his maxim of making himself all things to all men — so far as no principle was violated.<sup>1</sup> The circumcision of Timothy as truly illustrates the principles of Paul as the circumcision of Titus would have contradicted them.

The substantial correctness of the narrative of the action of the Jerusalem conference as it is given in the Acts is placed beyond reasonable doubt by one consideration. From what is known of James and is conceded by critics of every school, we may be sure that he could not have been satisfied with *less* in the way of concession on the part of the Gentile converts than the result of the conference called for. It is equally certain that the apostle Paul would never have consented to the requirement of *more*. And we know from Paul's own lips that the two apostles

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 20 *seq.*

joined hands in fraternal fellowship. In connection with the Jerusalem conference there are debated questions of chronology, but these are of minor importance. Enough that nothing can be shown to affect the general credibility of the Acts or the view as to its authorship which was entertained in the Church from the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The truth of the account given of the council in Acts is urgently maintained by critics who are least of all open to the suspicion of an apologetic bias. Such are Keim, *Aus dem Urchristenthum*, pp. 64-89, Mangold, in Mangold-Bleek, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 300 n. Even Weizsäcker, who makes much of what he regards as difficulties in Luke's narrative, concedes the historical fact of the decree as its contents are given by him. See *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 179. For remarks which evince here a sound historical perception, see Wendt in Meyer-Wendt, *Apostelgeschichte*, ad. c. xv.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

It is plain to every observant reader that the fourth Gospel has certain marked points of unlikeness to the first three. This fact is the occasion of the controversy as to its apostolic origin. The reasons assigned for doubt or explicit denial on this point are entitled to candid attention. Not to prejudice the case, it is yet right to remind the reader that the situation is one where the weapon of the assailant is liable to be turned against himself. For the greater the contrast between this Gospel and the other three, the more serious, perhaps — if the Gospel be not genuine — may be the task of accounting both for the creation of such a narrative and for the acceptance of its authority in the place and at the period of its origin, and by the churches, far and wide, in the Roman Empire. Moreover, it is conceivable that this evident contrast should be more than balanced by deeper, even if less obvious features of resemblance.

The ordinary belief respecting the apostle John has been derived, first, from the Synoptic Gospels, secondly, from the contents of the fourth Gospel, and thirdly, from the ancient ecclesiastical writings. From these sources it is ascertained that the father of the apostle, if not wealthy, was possessed of a competence, and in his occupation, which was that of a fisherman, employed hired laborers. His home was by the Sea of Galilee, a sheet of water which was girded by a circle of prosperous cities.<sup>1</sup> The adjacent region was peopled by a dense population, spirited and thriving, mostly made up of Jews. But it was covered by a network of roads, and was traversed by the great commercial route from Damascus to the Mediterranean, which passed into Phœnicia, a land "half Greek," the busy centre of manufactures and trade. Galilee could be no stranger to Græco-Roman traits and ways

<sup>1</sup> An excellent description of Galilee is given by Professor G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of Palestine*. See, also, S. Merrill, in *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Galilee, Sea of"; and, by the same author, *Galilee in the Time of Christ*.



that overspread the lands on the east and westward to the seacoast. John had the nurture which Jewish youth usually received in a religious household and from schools connected with the synagogues. His spirit is indicated by his presence on the banks of the Jordan, a devout listener to the preaching of John the Baptist. Introduced there to Jesus, and called afterward to be his permanent follower, he appears in the Synoptics as one of the three most prominent apostles, a leadership which, St. Paul informs us, he retained later, when James, the brother of the Lord, had taken the place of one of them. He is depicted in the earlier period as being of a temperament fervid, even to the point of vehemence, yet with another, but not at all incongruous, phase of character, a sensibility and a gentleness which especially endeared him to Jesus. After the death of the Master he is seen standing with Peter before the Sanhedrim, both speaking with a fearless confidence that excited wonder in this tribunal. By them the two apostles are stigmatized as an "unlearned and ignorant couple," — by which is not meant that they are plebeians or weak-minded, but that they are not possessed of the learning of the rabbis — much as a body of official clergy might look down upon a brace of laymen not versed in the lore of the schools, yet assuming to instruct their superiors. The second period in the career of the apostle John begins under circumstances greatly altered. The Jewish nation is prostrated by the Roman conquest. The temple is in ruins. The apostle has found a home in the heart of a Gentile community, in an atmosphere where Christian disciples are more or less affected by Hellenistic influences. He is the venerated guide of a group of churches differing in some of their characteristics from Christian societies of a predominantly Jewish cast. Here, in the closing decades of his life, as the century draws to its end, it falls to his lot to communicate, orally and in writings, the facts in the life of Jesus of most interest to himself and of most profit to his disciples, and to set forth that portion of the teaching of Jesus which lay nearest his own heart.

Down to a comparatively recent date the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel had been virtually undisputed. The solitary exception of a handful of dissentients in the ancient period was in a form and under circumstances which deprive it of the slightest weight as an historical testimony. This is perceived by noteworthy scholars, such as Zeller, notwithstanding that they themselves hold the same negative opinion. This Gospel has been prized by the most gifted minds in the Christian Church as the pearl of the Evangelic histories. An early Father, Clement of Alexandria, in whom genius was united with wide and varied learning, characterized it as "the spiritual Gospel" that followed after the other three, which had dealt more with the external

aspects of the life of Jesus. By none has this estimate been more emphatically reëchoed than by Luther, who pronounced it the unique, tender, preëminent Gospel, far excelling the other three.<sup>1</sup>

The genuineness of the fourth Gospel was called in question by one or more of the later English Deists, and occasionally about a century ago, on the continent, by individuals of little account. More stir was made in 1820 by the publication of Bretschneider, a more prominent theologian of the rationalistic type, who afterwards partially disavowed his opinion. With the rise of the Tübingen School of critics, near the middle of the century just closed, the polemic against the generally accepted view of the authorship of the Gospel began to be waged with a much larger outlay of learning and ingenuity. The shock occasioned by the advocacy, in different quarters, of the anti-Johannean view is liable unquestionably to give to the defence of the ordinary conservative view an apologetic bias. On the other hand, certainly the earlier pioneers of the negative opinion, and the later, including Strauss and Baur, are properly classified under the head of Rationalists, in the usual acceptation of the term, with whom there is, to say the least, a natural and surely an equally unscientific prepossession adverse to an opinion which, if sound, affixes to the testimony in this Gospel respecting facts and doctrine the seal of an apostolic witness of the first rank.

The rejection of the Johannean authorship, so far as we need to notice it here, began with the essay of Baur in 1844.<sup>2</sup> His idea of the fourth Gospel was part and parcel of his theory of the philosophy of history in general, and of the evolution of Christianity in particular. Christianity was held to be a development on the plane of nature, which passed through successive stages, matching the abstract scheme of the Hegelian logic. Baur's theory concerning the Gospel is at least definite and intelligible. He did not wage, as many do, a guerilla warfare on received opinions. His view is that the book is an idealized history, a mixture of fact and fiction. The author was at once devout and speculative. He

<sup>1</sup> "... ist Johannis Evangelium das einzige, zarte, recht Hauptevangelium, und den anderen dreien weit, weit vorzuziehen und höher zu heben." It has, adds Luther, fewer events and more preaching (predigt). Luther's *Vorrede N. T.*, ed. 1545.

<sup>2</sup> In Zeller's *Jbb.*, 1844, vol. i. pp. 2, 3; *Kritisch. Untersuch. üb. d. kanonischen Evangg.*, 1847.

was a Gnostic who cherished a certain conception of the Logos or Word, believed in the identity of the Logos with the historic Jesus, and aimed to exhibit this identity in a fictitious narrative of a symbolic character. The book then is a theological romance composed for this end, and at the same time to bring together diverging theological parties.

The historic material, much of which is in the main a creation of the author, presents in the concrete his idea of the Logos. The distinction made between "light" and "darkness" becomes in the Gospel a bald dualism. The principle of darkness is embodied in the Jews, and the development of their unbelief is made to keep pace with the progressive manifestation of Christ, or of the Logos in Christ, which provokes it. External events, especially miracles, are merely a sensuous counterpart or mirror of "the idea"—a kind of staging set up by the author to be forthwith pulled down. One design, we are told, is to show the nullity of a faith which is produced by miracles. They are introduced into the Gospel as a crutch brought in for the sake of being cast aside.

On this theory, how shall we conceive of the mental state of the Evangelist? We are assured that he is sincere; that in imagination he identifies himself with the apostle John; that so far as doctrine is concerned, he writes as he feels that John would write were he alive. In short, he is absorbed in a series of pictorial views (*Anschaunungen und Bilder*) of the grandest and most significant character. In the course of his work on this Gospel, Baur not infrequently intimates that the author in his own consciousness well-nigh confounds fancy with fact. He loses himself, as it were, in the symbols of his own creation. He is in a kind of waking dream. The artistic product took on the aspect of reality, so spontaneously did it grow out of the idea, its living germ. Fancy Bunyan to have been so far carried away in composing the allegory of *Pilgrim's Progress* that his tale affected him as if it were actual history. Something like this state of mind is seriously attributed by Baur to the author of the fourth Gospel. In this way the conclusion that the work is a fruit of wilful imposture was escaped. Baur was constrained to date the Gospel as late as 160 or 170. Otherwise leaps would be requisite in the room of a continuous progress of historic development. He had great capacity as a critic, but he was under the sway of a theological bias. Hence his fabric as a whole, notwithstanding much that was admirable in parts, was built upon the sand. The main postulate of his system is practically without adherents. Neither John nor Peter was a judaizer. Neither demanded that Gentile converts should be circumcised. There was no such cleft in the Church, no such warfare of parties, as Baur assumed to exist. There was no rupture to call for a series of doctrinal efforts at compromise such as were said to have been the motive of several of the New Tes-

ament writings. The proposition that the primitive type of Christianity was Ebionitic is an historical mistake.

At present so late a date as Baur assigned for the composition of the fourth Gospel meets with no favor. Among the critics who do not accept the Johannean authorship there has been a pretty steady retreat from one historic decade to another. Zeller fixed the date at 150, Hilgenfeld at 140, Keim at 130, Renan and Schenkel from 110 to 115. Lightfoot's prediction that the time would come when it would be deemed discreditable in any critic "to assign the Gospel to any later date than the end of the first century or the very beginning of the second" is well-nigh fulfilled. "Between 95 and 115," is the conjecture of Moffatt.<sup>1</sup> Professor McGiffert holds that the Gospel, in case it was not written by the apostle, must be pushed "back as far as the early years" of the second century.<sup>2</sup> Harnack, who has few peers in ability and learning, puts it as far back as from 80 to 110. But this recession must be admitted to carry in it the danger of shipwreck for the theory of non-apostolic authorship in all its phases. Either of the new dates brings the time of composition into perilous nearness to the living apostle himself, unless we reject ancient and well-accredited tradition that he lived down to the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98). Keim met the exigency thus arising by casting overboard the universal tradition of the abode of the apostle at Ephesus. This intrepid scepticism was withstood by Hilgenfeld and other representatives of the Tübingen criticism, and among others, by one of the ablest of the advocates of the non-apostolic authorship, Weizsäcker. A chief point in the Tübingen scepticism had been the belief that the Apocalypse is genuine, and is incompatible with the Johannean authorship of the Gospel. This school was not disposed to surrender its conviction that the apostle lived and taught in Asia Minor.

In the ensuing pages notice will be frequently taken of opinions of Baur on the Johannean question, for the reason that, notwithstanding a prevalent dissent from so much that he contended for, his special judgments and interpretations frequently reappear in critical discussions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historical N. T.*, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> *Apostolic Age*, p. 614.

<sup>3</sup> Jülicher, one of the more extreme of the recent German critics, calls the fourth Gospel "a philosophical fiction" ("eine philosophische Dichtung"). *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 258.



As regards the use of the Gospel by particular writers in the second century, if students would remember how scanty often are the early references to ancient classical writers of celebrity, they would be less sceptical and less exacting in relation to the principal New Testament writings, and would be more impressed by the strength of the attestation furnished us of their genuineness. Appian, a very eminent man, published his Roman History about A.D. 150. The first reference to it in literature is in the sixth century.<sup>1</sup> Keim conceded that the fourth Gospel was among the gospels known to Marcion, that Justin Martyr has quotations from it, that it antedated the Epistle of Barnabas and the Ignatian epistles, and that its use is manifest in the extant literature of the Church as early as the use of the first three Gospels.<sup>2</sup> Mangold went almost as far. He candidly avowed that there is no defect in the external evidence.<sup>3</sup> In the brief survey of the evidence which is to follow, it will be taken for granted that the Gospel and the first Epistle are from the same pen. Baur and Hilgenfeld maintained the negative; but the dissent of these critics from one another on the question, which was the prior work and which the later, is an argument for the identity of authorship, — an opinion which is supported as well by convincing internal evidence as by the uniform tradition.

We begin with a notice of the early historic testimonies. Eusebius, in the first quarter of the fourth century, having in his hands much of the earliest Christian literature which has perished in the shipwreck that befell ancient writings, knew of no dispute respecting the origin of this Gospel. It stands on his list of *Homologoumena* — New Testament books universally accepted.<sup>4</sup> It is in the Ancient Syriac version, and in the Old Latin version of North Africa — documents not later than the end of the second century. Origen, one of the most erudite of scholars, whose birth (from Christian parents) took place within the limits of the second century (in 185), counts it among the Gospels “not disputed in the church under the whole heaven.”<sup>5</sup> Clement of Alexandria, in consonance with Irenæus, his contemporary, relates what he had heard from the oldest presbyters. John, he says, wrote a “spir-

<sup>1</sup> White, *Translation of Appian*, Preface, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte Jesu*, i. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Mangold-Bleek, *Einh. in d. N. T.* (ed. 3), p. 281, n.

<sup>4</sup> *H. E.*, vi. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, vi. 25.



itual Gospel," being prompted thereto by his friends and impelled by the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The Muratorian Fragment gives with more detail a tradition of like purport. The apostle had been exhorted to write, it tells us, by his fellow-disciples and bishops. In Justin Martyr we find passages which it is in the highest degree probable that he found in this Gospel. From no other authority could he have derived his doctrine of the person of Christ.<sup>2</sup> It formed one of the four Gospels amalgamated in the Diatessaron of Tatian, who was Justin's pupil.<sup>3</sup> Theophilus, a contemporary of Tatian, who became Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 169, describes the fourth Gospel as one of the Holy Scriptures, and John as guided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> He wrote a commentary on the Gospels, and in a way combined the four in a single work.<sup>5</sup> Athenagoras, a contemporary of Theophilus, speaks of Christ in terms which are obviously founded on passages in this Gospel.<sup>6</sup> Melito, Bishop of Sardis, a contemporary of Polycarp and of Papias, referred to the ministry of Jesus as lasting for three years—a fact for which his authority could hardly have been any other than the fourth Gospel.<sup>7</sup> Another contemporary, Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, indirectly but manifestly implies its existence and authority.<sup>8</sup> Celsus, the most noted of the literary opponents of Christianity in the second century, resorted to the fourth Gospel, as well as to the first three, to get materials for his polemic.<sup>9</sup> There is some

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See this work, p. 214. Professor Ezra Abbot, in his *Essay on The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* (*Critical Essays*, pp. 9–107), comes as near to a demonstration of its use by Justin as the nature of this species of evidence permits. See pp. 22 *seq.*, 63 *seq.*, with the notes. He shows that the inaccuracy in Justin's quotation of John iii. 3 occurs, *eg.*, repeatedly in Jeremy Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54 *seq.* "Justin, his [Papias's] younger contemporary . . . employs our four Gospels as directly or indirectly apostolic. Occasionally he takes up an uncanonical tradition. . . . The fragment of the Gospel of Peter (100–130 A.D.) dispelled all theories which made this the source of Justin's quotations, and identified it with his Memoirs of Peter (*i.e.* Mark). . . . Cascara's publication forever settled all questions as to which four had been thus employed, and showed their relative standing." B. W. Bacon, *An Introduction to the N. T.*, pp. 45, 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Autolicum*, ii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Hieron., *De Viris illustr.*, 25; *Epp.*, 151.

<sup>6</sup> *Suppl. pro Christianis*, c. 10.

<sup>7</sup> See Otto's *Corpus Apol.*, t. ix. p. 416.

<sup>8</sup> *Chron. Pasch.*, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 226.

reason to think that it was used by Hermas;<sup>1</sup> and perhaps some traces, though less distinct, of its use are in the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas.<sup>2</sup> Polycarp, in addition to the proof of his use of the Gospel, which is to be inferred from what we learn of him from Irenæus, inserts into his own short Epistle to the Philippians a passage which is found in no other book but the first Epistle of John.<sup>3</sup> As to Papias, there is not the least evidence to disprove his acquaintance with the fourth Gospel; for the silence of Eusebius on this topic affords not the faintest presumption that Papias made no mention of it.<sup>4</sup> But Eusebius does expressly state that Papias used the first Epistle of John,<sup>5</sup> which is evidently from the same author as the Gospel<sup>6</sup>—“this Epistle being one of the Catholic Epistles the use of which by the early writers was a point which Eusebius was interested to record.”<sup>7</sup> The testimony of Irenæus has already been adduced. He cites from “elders,” venerated persons, the contemporaries of Papias, an interpretation of the words of Christ in John xiv. 2, and attributes to these worthies an idea relative to the length of the Saviour’s ministry, which was suggested by a misinterpretation of John viii. 57.<sup>8</sup> These testimonies traverse the century. They carry us back to the lifetime of contemporaries and disciples of John. Finally, appended to the Gospel itself is the endorsement, which comes from those into whose hands it was first given (John xxi. 24), and which without doubt

<sup>1</sup> *Simil.*, ix. 12; cf. John x. 7, 9, xix. 6; *Mand.*, xii. 3; cf. 1 John v. 3. The argument of Dr. C. Taylor, *Witness to the Four Gospels* (1892), is not void of weight.

<sup>2</sup> Keim takes the affirmative; but see Luthardt, p. 76; Sanday, *Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 270–273; Cunningham, *Dissert. on the Ep. of Barnabas*, etc., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Phil.*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 32 seq. The chapter of Lightfoot on “The Silence of Eusebius” sweeps away numerous false inferences, which are current, of a piece with that concerning Papias.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 39.

<sup>6</sup> “No two works in the whole range of literature show clearer signs of the genius of one writer, and no other pair of works are so completely in a class by themselves, apart from the work of their own and of every other time.” Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 302.

<sup>7</sup> The *Didache* (cc. ix. x.) contains passages of a Johannine cast, probably based on the Gospel. The special arguments of Resch are deserving of attention. See Appendix, Note 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, v. 36, 2, ii. 22, 5.

refers to John the apostle. There is no pretence that it was forged.

We have still to glance at the evidence afforded by the parties without the pale of the Church. Tertullian distinctly implies that Marcion (A.D. 140) was acquainted with John's Gospel, but discarded it because he would acknowledge no other of the apostles than Paul.<sup>1</sup> We have little direct information respecting the canon of the Montanists, but unquestionably their doctrine sprang partly from what they read of the Paraclete in the fourth Gospel. The Basilidians and the Valentinians, gnostic sects which arose in the second quarter of the second century, made use of it; the Valentinians, Irenæus tells us, made abundant use of it. They sought to bolster up their opinions by a misinterpretation of its contents.<sup>2</sup> Heracleon, a follower of Valentinus, wrote a commentary upon it, from which Origen quotes largely.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian explicitly says that Valentinus himself used all of the four Gospels.<sup>4</sup> Irenæus nowhere implies the contrary. So far from this, a study of the context shows that Valentinus is not of the class who rejected any of the four. There is little room for doubting that Hippolytus, a pupil of Irenæus, derived those comments upon certain places in the Gospel which he quotes, from Valentinus himself, and not from a disciple of his. There is no pretext for such a doubt concerning his references to Basilides.<sup>5</sup> Basilides flourished under Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). Valentinus came to Rome about A.D. 140. Heracleon composed his commentary about A.D. 160. In the middle of the second century, the debate was carried on between the Church and the gnostic heresiarchs. Justin shows the strongest antipathy to Marcion and his followers, the Valentinians, Basilidians, and the sect of Saturninus.<sup>6</sup> Their doctrines he denounces as blasphemous. Now all of these parties on the one side, and the stanch defenders of orthodoxy on the other, accept in common the fourth Gospel. The Gnostics did not dispute its apostolic

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Marcion*, iv. 3, cf. c. 2; *De Carne Christi*, c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 2, 7.

<sup>3</sup> For Origen's references, see Grabe, *Spicilegium*, vol. ii., or Stieren's ed. of Irenæus, i. 938-971, c. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *De Præscriptione Hæret.* For the sense of *videtur* in the passage, see this work, p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *Ref. omn. Hær.*, vi. 30, vii. 22, 27. See Prof. E. Abbot, *Critical Essays*, p. 85; J. Drummond, *Journ. Bibl. Lit.* (1892), pp. 133-159.

<sup>6</sup> *Dial.*, c. 35; cf. *Apol.*, i. 26.

authorship, but resorted to artificial interpretation of its contents. The church teachers in confuting them had no heavier task than to expose the fantastic character of their exegesis. The Gnostics, however, made so much of the Gospel, and turned it to such a use, that had there been a plausible pretext for doubting its apostolic authorship, the temptation to do so would have been very strong. The beginnings of the Gnostic controversy are as early as the Apocalypse, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Epistle to the Colossians. Who was ingenious enough to frame a book of such a character as to suit both the contending parties? If the author of the work was known to have been an apostle, no explanation is called for, inasmuch as the Gnostics, Marcion excepted, did not profess to set aside the authority of the apostles.<sup>1</sup>

Mention has been made of the contention of Keim, that the ancient ecclesiastical writers — we might say, all antiquity — made the mistake of confounding the apostle John with another person of the same name, "John, the Presbyter." This supposition is entitled to attention, chiefly for the reason that it has received some countenance from so eminent a scholar as Harnack.<sup>2</sup> It has to meet a formidable obstacle which it would require very definite proof to sustain, in the testimony of Irenæus. Of especial interest is the letter of Irenæus to one Florinus, whom he in his youth had personally known, but who had embraced heretical opinions. The letter dwells on the acquaintance which both had had with Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who died as a martyr in 155 or 156, at the age of eighty-six. The letter reads as follows: —

"I saw thee when I was still a boy, in Lower Asia in company with Polycarp, while thou wast faring prosperously in the royal court, and

<sup>1</sup> In the power of realizing the situation and its possibilities, in the epoch adverted to, no scholar in Church History excels Neander. In a passage in his *Life of Jesus*, he gives in forcible terms his judgment on the question here considered. See Appendix, Note 14.

<sup>2</sup> It should be stated that Harnack, as might be expected, is not insensible to the difficulties that beset this hypothesis, even when the one fact, which is allowed to admit of no question, is considered, that "at the end of the second century, not Irenæus alone, but the 'Asia Minor Christians' ['Kleinasiaten'] generally held John, the son of Zebedee, to be the author of the Gospel." *Die Chronologie d. altchristl. Lit.*, i. 668. But the suggestion is risked that the story of the identity of this author with John the apostle was started and spread by Presbyters at Ephesus. *Ibid.*, pp. 679, 680.

endeavoring to stand well with him. For I distinctly remember the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it; so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John, and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about his miracles, and about his teaching, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, he would relate altogether in accordance with the scriptures. To these [discourses] I used to listen at the time with attention by God's mercy which was bestowed upon me, noting them down, not on paper but in my heart; and by the grace of God, I constantly ruminate upon them faithfully."<sup>1</sup>

Exactly how old Irenæus was at the time to which these reminiscences refer, we do not know. The Greek word for boy (*παις*) is a term which admits of the supposition that he was not less than eighteen or twenty. The Greek for "our first youth," an expression of Irenæus in another place, frequently signifies "manhood," and would not be out of place if he had reached that period of life. It is a safe conclusion, from all the evidence, that his birth occurred as early as 130.<sup>2</sup> Even if it be assumed that at the time referred to he was not more than fifteen years old, the material point is that his recollection of the circumstances mentioned in the letter was perfectly distinct. That by the "John" to whom Polycarp referred, Irenæus understood the apostle of that name, — the same to whom he and his contemporaries attributed the authorship of the fourth Gospel, — no one doubts.

The new hypothesis to account for the ascription of the authorship of the fourth Gospel to the apostle John is that Irenæus misunderstood Polycarp; that he was really speaking of another Ephesian of the same name, and that in the second century the two Johns came to be confounded. Papias, among his sources of information of which he makes mention in the passage cited by Eusebius, names John the apostle, and then, a little later, two "disciples of the Lord," Aristion and the "Presbyter [or Elder]

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's translation, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Zahn would place it as early as 115.



John." It is possible that Papias, perhaps from inadvertence, mentions the apostle twice — the prefix in the last instance not being an official title, but used, as it often was, to signify the veneration in which a Christian worthy was held. Such is the opinion of some scholars deserving of high respect. But the more probable, as it is the more common opinion, is that a second John is meant, and that "Elder" is used by Papias as a designation of the office held by him in the Church. In this case the question is, was Polycarp talking not of the apostle, as Irenæus without a shadow of doubt supposed, but of this "Elder"? Can this be believed? Even if Irenæus was a boy of fifteen, it is clear that his attention had been riveted on the declarations of Polycarp. They were of absorbing interest to him. His recollection of them was too vivid to be inexact. Polycarp's "manner of life," "his personal appearance," the "place where he used to sit," were stamped upon his memory. It was not a single interview that he remembered. "I *used* to listen," "where Polycarp *used* to sit," "how he *would* describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he *would* relate their words" — these are the terms in which the eager and admiring pupil described his teacher. It is not formal addresses like modern sermons that Irenæus speaks of. Polycarp told those who gathered about him what he had heard from John and from "the rest who had seen the Lord," "about the Lord," "his miracles and his teachings." "There must have been," as Professor Gwatkin observes, "a great difference in the stories themselves, and certainly in the telling of them, between the Lord's own apostle and the Elder John who did not belong to the inner circle of his disciples."<sup>1</sup> It is a large tax upon credulity when we are invited to believe that Polycarp, all this while, was talking of some other John than the apostle. Even were it supposable that Irenæus himself misapprehended Polycarp to this extent, were there no other listeners about him among his acquaintance to set him right? Were there none, in the East or the West, in all the years that followed, to open his eyes to so egregious an error? There, for example, was Pothinus, with whom at Lyons Irenæus was associated as a presbyter, and whom, on his death in 177, at the

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, "Irenæus on the Fourth Gospel," *The Contemporary Review*, vol. 71 (1897, I.), p. 226.

age of ninety, Irenæus succeeded in the episcopal office.<sup>1</sup> Harnack does not question the fact that Irenæus knew nothing of any other John in Asia but John the apostle.<sup>2</sup> The confusion of names in the case of Philip the apostle and Philip the evangelist, in which Eusebius shared, furnishes no parallel to such an error on the part of Irenæus.<sup>3</sup>

But what is known of the "Presbyter" John? He is apparently a much more notable person in the German criticism of the present day than he was in his own time or later.

As we have said, he is probably on the list which Papias gives of his informants respecting apostolic times. Later in the century, Clement of Alexandria and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, like Irenæus, knew nothing of such a person.<sup>4</sup> About 250, Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, hazards the conjecture that the Apocalypse — a book which he regarded with great disfavor on account of its teaching, or what he took to be such, on the millennium — was written by another of the same name as the apostle. He has no other reason for this surmise except that he had heard of there being two tombs at Ephesus, each having the name

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus is not free from inaccuracies in his references to traditions. It is a rash and false inference which imputes to him in general a want of trustworthiness. The most noteworthy instance of error is in the passage in which he says that the ministry of Jesus did not terminate until he was forty years old. Probably this idea was mistakenly deduced from John viii. 58, "Thou art not yet fifty years old," etc. This chronological supposition was not unlikely at the basis of the statement of the "elders," to which Irenæus refers in support of it. However improbable, it was not an impossible impression, for nothing in John's Gospel definitely excludes it. The phrase "all the elders" may be an overstatement. See on this case of inaccuracy, Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 246. On the loose and exaggerated charges of inaccuracy against the Fathers generally, see, also, Lightfoot's protest and the proofs brought forward by him, especially the comparison of the Fathers in this respect with Tacitus and other contemporary classical authors. *Ibid.*, p. 268. Other references to the life of John are in Irenæus, iii. 3, 4, ii. 2, 5, iii. 3, 4.

Réville, *Quatrième Évangile*, etc. (1901), p. 13, says of the Letter of Irenæus to Florinus, "We see that the apologetic prepossession (préoccupation) never leaves him." He is credited by Réville with being concerned, in order to save Florinus and others from heresy, to make it out that he has known in his childhood some one who knew the apostles, etc. Few students of Irenæus need any answer to this imputation.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronologie*, etc., p. 673.

<sup>3</sup> See what is said of Polycrates above, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> "Sie von einem anderen Johannes in Asien nichts wissen." So Harnack, *Chronologie*, i. p. 673.

"John" inscribed on it.<sup>1</sup> Of course there might have been two distinct monuments of the apostle in different parts of the city or the suburbs. Be this as it may, Dionysius says nothing of the "Presbyter" John, whom he would not have omitted to mention here had he ever heard of him. Nor, with the sole exception noted above, is there a hint of his existence in any ecclesiastical writer prior to Eusebius (about 325). And even what Eusebius has to say of him is probably an echo of the remark of Dionysius. The little that is said after Papias of the possibility of a second John at Ephesus springs out of doctrinal objections to the contents of the book of Revelation. If the "Presbyter" John was a person of so high consideration as it must be presupposed that he was, in case he was known to be the author of the fourth Gospel, and if he was the subject of detailed reminiscences in public discourses of so celebrated a man as Polycarp, how account for the well-nigh universal silence respecting him?

If it was of the "Presbyter" that Polycarp talked in public addresses, at least there must have been numerous hearers who did not misunderstand him. We must not forget other connections of Irenæus with this venerated martyr. In an admonitory letter of Irenæus to Victor, Bishop of Rome, he referred to a visit of Polycarp to that city (A.D. 155), and to the appeal which Polycarp then made to instruction which he had received respecting the observance of Easter from John and other apostles.<sup>2</sup> If Irenæus erred in this statement, it would have been evident at Rome, where the occurrences at Polycarp's visit would be remembered. It is not alone from Polycarp directly that Irenæus was informed of his recollections of John. The story of the apostle's meeting the heretic Cerinthus in the bath, he had heard from individuals to whom Polycarp had related it.<sup>3</sup> Not Polycarp alone, but other "elders" — worthies of a former day — who had also known John, are referred to by Irenæus. Polycarp was not the sole link connecting him with the apostle. He had before him the work of Papias, in which, if anywhere, the apostle was distinguished from the presbyter of the same name. Of this we may

<sup>1</sup> Jerome speaks of two tombs at Ephesus, each inscribed with the name of John. But he considers them both memorials of the apostle (*De Viris Ill.*, c. 9). Says Dr. McGiffert, "The existence of two such memorials in Ephesus by no means proves that more than one John was buried there." See Dr. McGiffert's ed. of Eusebius, iii. 39, n. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, ed. Stieren, *Fragmenta*, iii p. 826.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4.

be sure that neither Irenæus nor Eusebius found anything in Papias *not consistent* with the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. If Irenæus was mistaken, of which we cannot be certain, in saying that Papias himself had been *taught* by the apostle, this will not justify the imputing to him of a like mistake respecting Polycarp, with whom he had had personal intercourse of the character described by him.<sup>1</sup>

The fact of the residence of the apostle John at Ephesus, and of his wide influence in that region, is not open to reasonable doubt. Renan even goes so far as to say that we should have to suppose a falsehood on the part of Irenæus if we held that John did not live in Asia.<sup>2</sup> Other witnesses besides Irenæus testify to

<sup>1</sup> However Weizsäcker errs on certain points, his observations on the suspected confusion of names and on other connected points are sound and convincing. Between the case of Polycarp and Papias, the great difference lies here, that "Irenæus nowhere refers to information which he had received from Papias. To infer a mistake in the case of Polycarp is therefore unwarranted." "That Irenæus does not mention the other John, furnishes no reason for thinking that he confounded him with the apostle. The whole weight which Irenæus lays upon the apostolic character of his John contradicts the assumption. Not even that this second John had been in Ephesus has an older witness for it. From the words of Papias we find that he [the second John] came down to his time; from which it follows that he also stood in point of time much too near Irenæus to render it possible for him to be confounded by him with the apostle." Even if Papias did not err in placing him in the apostolic instead of the next following generation, the explanation of the Johannean writings would not be a hair easier than if they came from the apostle John. The nail is too weak to hang upon it the whole Johannean tradition. Weizsäcker, *Das Apostolische Zeitalter* (ed. 2), pp. 480-482.

What Eusebius says (iii. 39) contains no proof that Papias was a hearer of the Presbyter John or of Aristion. What Eusebius here says in one sentence he virtually retracts in the next. The language in the quotation of Eusebius does not imply that Papias had personally known either of them.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Évangiles*, p. 425, n. 2.

The attestation of Polycrates (Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 31) is thought by some to be weakened in value by a confusion of names, which he may have shared with others, in regard to "Philip," whom he refers to as "one of the twelve apostles who sleeps in Hierapolis." The broad use of the term "apostle," coupled with the fact of the truly apostolic labors of the Evangelist of this name, might naturally give rise to this confusion, in which even Eusebius and, later, Augustine, partake. See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Philip the Apostle"; McGiffert's ed. of Eusebius, *ad loc.* That it was the apostle who died at Hierapolis is the opinion of Lightfoot (*Colossians*, p. 45; *App. Fathers*; Ignatius, i. p. 422; *Colossians* (ed. 3, 1879), p. 46). The

the sojourn of the apostle there, — Apollonius an Asiatic bishop and an early writer ; Polycrates, who was born as early as A.D. 125, a bishop of Ephesus, seven of whose relatives had also been bishops ; Clement of Alexandria, who relates the incident — whether it be true or not is now immaterial — of John's conversion of the apostate youth who had become a robber.<sup>1</sup> Other early legends relating to the apostle imply at least the knowledge that he had lived at Ephesus. Justin Martyr, who was a native of Palestine, was acquainted with Christians in Asia as well as at Rome. We know that in the year 135 he sojourned at Ephesus. Now Justin says that the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse. It matters not, as concerns the question now before us, whether in that particular he was correct or not. It is certain, from its contents as well as from the tradition, that at Ephesus or in its neighborhood the book of Revelation was written. This book was undoubtedly ascribed to the apostle. It would not have been, had he not been known to have lived there. Keim is one of the critics who admit that the author of the Gospel, whoever he was, proceeded on the supposition that John had lived in Asia Minor ; so that on their own views of the date of the Gospel, early in the second century the belief must have prevailed that the apostle had dwelt there. The traces of the influence of John in Asia were distinct and permanent. There was in reality, as Lightfoot has shown, a later "school of John" — a class of writers coming after Polycarp and Papias, and including Melito of Sardis, Claudius Apollinaris, and Polycrates — who bear incontestable marks of the peculiar influence of the apostle's teaching.<sup>2</sup> Weizsäcker, whose critical views on many important points are opposed to those of Lightfoot, is equally impressed with the proofs of a prevalent type of thought traceable to this apostle. He dwells on the variety of these evidences and

name of Philip is in the list of apostles in the fragment of Papias (Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 39). The arguments of Lightfoot appear to me to have weight. But whether Polycrates was correct or not in this designation, Polycrates was not bishop in Phrygian Hierapolis, but in Ephesus, and had exceptional advantages for being familiar with the main facts to which he adverts. If Philip the evangelist was a personal disciple of Christ, — and there is nothing in Acts to preclude this supposition, — he might the more easily have been confounded with the apostle by Polycrates as well as by others. See Zahn, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, ii. p. 573 (n. 3).

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.*, v. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, vii.



on the personal influence of the apostle which they presuppose.<sup>1</sup> Professor Loofs, a learned and impartial scholar, speaking of the influence of the Johannean teaching, says : —

“In regard to scarcely one point in the sphere of the History of Doctrine, ought the Church to be as much interested as in this. For here is presented a line of tradition within which the particulars, characteristic of the theology of a Biblical Book, — the Gospel which Luther styled ‘the unique, tender, principal Gospel,’ — manifest their influence, proceeding from a definable centre and source, within the sphere of the History of Doctrine. The ‘Introductions,’ to be sure, which take the Fourth Gospel for a philosophical after-birth of the Evangelical literature, are fond of talking of the scanty traces of the Gospel of John in the period prior to 150; but in truth there is no Biblical book whose influence, in the History of Doctrine, can be traced so clearly from the time of its composition, as that of the Gospel of John.”

Loofs calls attention to the distinct influence of the Johannean conception of Christ on Ignatius, in connection with the close relation of this Father to Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup>

The statements of Irenæus, who was in a position to ascertain the fact respecting the prolonged life of the apostle, are confirmed by the traditions incorporated in ancient ecclesiastical writers to which reference has been made. Clement’s account of the rescue of the outlaw chief, and Jerome’s interesting narrative of the aged apostle’s method of addressing his flock, indicate a general belief that his life was protracted to extreme old age.

The circumstance that there is no competing tradition as to the place of the apostle John’s death deserves mention. The tradition that Peter, as well as Paul, died at Rome, there being no other tradition as to the place of Peter’s death, has now gained acceptance. In the case of

<sup>1</sup> *Apostolisches Zeitalter* (ed. 2), p. 482 seq., p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> *Real. Encycl. d. K. u. Theol.* (ed. 3), iv. 29, art. “Christologie.” The Epistles of Ignatius are “saturated with Johannean ideas and phrases.” For some examples, see *A Biblical Introduction*, by Bennett and Adeney, p. 329, n. 4. It is said that Ignatius, writing to the Ephesians, mentions the apostle Paul by name (c. xii.), but not the apostle John. The reason is plain. It is in connection with his own foresight of martyrdom that he is reminded of Paul; John died in old age and in peace. In the preceding chapter (xi.), Ignatius speaks of the relation of the Ephesian Christians to “the apostles” in the plural. See Lightfoot, *App. Fathers*, vol. ii. sect. i. p. 64, vol. i. p. 390. Harnack (*Chronologie*, etc., p. 679, n.) considers it probable (überwiegend wahrscheinlich) that Ignatius has in mind the apostle John when he refers, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, to their association with *apostles*. In this Epistle, c. ix., the passage is apparently suggested by John xii. 32.

apostles so eminent the absence of rival traditions on this point is of weight.

We are authorized in picturing to ourselves the apostle John, near the close of the first century, at Ephesus, a flourishing centre of Christianity, surrounded by disciples whom he had trained — disciples who, in common with the churches in all that district, looked up to him with affectionate reverence. We must bear in mind that it is not as author only, conspicuous as that function was, that the ecclesiastical tradition concerning John's abode and ministry in Asia was connected. Included in this stream of tradition which spread far and wide was his instrumentality in organizing the churches in that region. His influence was operative toward restoring a unity in the Christian societies at the time when Jerusalem had ceased to be a centre, when Judaism was an implacably hostile force, and the apostle Paul was no more among the living. If the apostle John did not write the Gospel which bears his name, how did those Asian disciples and churches come to believe that he did? How did all the churches come to share in the belief?

Many of John's disciples must have been living at the time when the Gospel is admitted to have been in circulation. If it was not genuine, would not voices have been raised to dispute its claims? If spurious, very little scrutiny would have sufficed to detect it. Of late, the microscopic examination of particular passages in the Fathers, and prolonged comment on minor points of evidence about which debate may be started, have operated to spread a mist over the more comprehensive features of proof. The strength of the external argument for the apostolic authorship of the Gospel has seldom been fully appreciated by believer or sceptic.

Thus far we have tarried in the domain of external evidence. But the twenty-first chapter is evidently an appendix which follows the termination of the Gospel in the last verse of the twentieth. Yet it contains a testimony obviously from an external source, which, however, like the entire chapter which contains it, has formed a part of the Gospel since it passed out of the hands of the intimate disciples of John. One question is whether this closing chapter was a later addition of the author himself, or of these, or one of these, near associates. The twenty-third verse, which corrects a misinterpretation of words spoken by Jesus to

Peter, may not have been written before the death of the author of the Gospel, yet the supposition that they were is, perhaps, more natural. The occurrence of the words, "the sons of Zebedee" (v. 2), since the passage is in a list of apostles who were present with Jesus, might naturally enough come from the apostle John. The testimony referred to is the twenty-fourth verse, "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true." This is said of the Gospel that precedes. It is a declaration which means, and can only mean, that "the disciple" — a designation, it is admitted by all, of John, the apostle — *wrote* the fourth Gospel. The author of this statement speaks in the name of his fellow-disciples, as well as for himself. It is a genuine attestation which owed its value to the fact that its authors were known to those who read it.

It behooves us, however, further to inquire whether the force of the testimony for the apostolic authorship is weakened by the one instance of dissent from the universal belief — the dissent of the so-called "Alogi." This term is a nickname, coined by Hippolytus, or by Epiphanius, and is used by him in his descriptive catalogue of heresies, great and small.<sup>1</sup> The word might mean "averse to the Logos," or it might signify "irrationals." It was invented to stigmatize certain opponents of the Johannean authorship of the fourth Gospel in Thyatira, somewhere about 150. They had no name, and were not numerous enough or important enough to form a sect. They were prompted to their denial by their repugnance to the Montanist enthusiasts, in particular to what they taught respecting prophecy, the incarnate manifestation of the Paraclete, revived miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and an earthly millennium soon to be ushered in through the second coming of Christ. Their critical objections followed in aid of this doctrinal repugnance. So far as appears, they did not deny the divinity of Christ. It is not even certain that they rejected the Johannean conception of the Logos. But they discarded both the Gospel and the Apocalypse. From the way in which Irenæus refers to the "Alogi," it is evident that he looked upon them as a handful of dissentients whose departure from orthodox tenets was in the particulars named above.<sup>2</sup> The extreme to which they were carried in their hostility

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, iii., xi. 9.

to the tenets of the Montanists, who appealed to the promise of the Paraclete in the Gospel, naturally engendered an opposition to this Gospel. For this position they would be inclined to seek for some objective grounds, beyond the doctrinal reason.<sup>1</sup> Some of them, not improbably, made their way to Rome, or their views may have become known there through writings. A lost writing of Hippolytus in defence of the Gospel and the Apocalypse is judged to have related to them. Be it observed, however, that in the widespread reaction of the third century against Chiliasm, it was not the apostolic authorship of the Gospel, but of the Apocalypse, that was antagonized. It appears that even Caius, an "ecclesiastical person" at Rome, at the end of the second century, did not question the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. It was not questioned by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, a half-century later. The point of chief concern is, to ascertain what positive explanation the "Alogi" had to give of the origin of the fourth Gospel. They said that it was not worthy to be, or to be recognized, in the Church. This implies that, as a matter of fact, it *was* recognized and accepted. Following the custom of imputing unacceptable writings, professing to be apostolic, to heretics, they ascribed the fourth Gospel to Cerinthus — absurdly, since his opinions were the reverse of its teachings. That any disciple of the apostle, or any group of his disciples, was its author, they did not so much as conjecture. In the mixed system of Cerinthus, the world was made by angels, one of whom gave to the Jews their law. At the baptism of the man Jesus, Christ descended upon him from above, but parted with him before his crucifixion. With these ideas was united a millenarian tenet of a materialistic type.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as Cerinthus was known to be a contemporary of the apostle John, the notion of the Alogi as to its author is tantamount to a concurrence with the traditional statement as to its date. It shows, moreover, that if they had ever heard of "John the Presbyter," it did not so much as occur to them to think of him as possibly the author of this Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the Alogi and the importance to be attached to them, the discussions of Theodore Zahn and Harnack, who differ widely on this last point, are of special value. See Zahn, *Gesch. d. Kanons*, i. 223–262, ii. 977; *Einl. in d. N. Test.*, ii. 447, 449, 46 *seq.* Harnack, *Dogmengesch.*, i. (ed. 3), p. 660 *seq.*; *Real-Encycl. d. Theol. u. K.*, i. p. 386 *seq.*, art. "Aloger" (by Zahn).

<sup>2</sup> For a concise sketch of the opinions of Cerinthus, see Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 190.



Zeller, one of the most eminent writers of the school of Baur, candidly remarks that the protest of the Alogi, connected as it was with the ascription by them of the Gospel to Cerinthus, does not indicate the existence of any other tradition respecting its origin than the tradition established in the Church.<sup>1</sup> Irenæus's notice of the objection made by the Alogi to the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel makes it evident that he regarded their objection as unimportant. Still, had it been felt that there was reason for doubt on the question, their assertion would have been likely to excite a ferment. It should be remembered that it occurred at a time when there was no accepted canon, no commonly recognized collection of New Testament Scriptures. Justin refers to the Gospels as being historical authorities, recognized as such by the churches. The reaction against the excesses of millenarianism provoked even later a repudiation of the Apocalypse, which was not confined to an insignificant local opposition.

A middle theory has been espoused by some, namely, that disciples of the apostle John composed the Gospel on the basis of oral instruction, which they had received from him. Matthew Arnold conjectured that the Ephesian Presbyters, partly on the basis of materials furnished by the apostle, were the authors of the book.<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria reports the tradition that John wrote at the urgent request of familiar friends. The Muratorian Fragment makes a like statement, with the additional circumstance of a revelation to Andrew, to the effect that John "should write down everything and all should certify."<sup>3</sup> Weizsäcker has advocated the opinion that the Gospel was written by a disciple of the apostle, on the basis of Johannean traditions. There is no patristic support for such an hypothesis. It has to confront, first, testimony, respecting the authorship of the book, that the writer himself gives, which will soon be adverted to; and, secondly, the direct testimony, evidently proceeding from the disciples of the apostle (John xxi. 24).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Theol. Jahrb.*, 1845, p. 645.

<sup>2</sup> *God and the Bible*, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Arnold renders the word *recognoscentibus* "revise." This is a possible, but not the usual, meaning of the word. It signifies "to inspect," "to examine" with a view to approval, hence "to indorse" or "authenticate." This appears to be its meaning in the document referred to.

<sup>4</sup> Harnack (*Chronologie*, etc., pp. 676, 677) speaks of verse 24 as the officious or uncalled-for testimony (*unberufenes Zeugniß*) attached to the Gospel. Yet as to its first part, the "bearing witness to these things" by the apostle John, he holds that there is a measure of truth in the statement. Yet



Notice must likewise be taken of the hypothesis of a partition of the Gospel between two distinct authors, the record of the discourses being ascribed to one, and the record of the historical occurrences to another.<sup>1</sup> Renan, it will be remembered, gave the preference to the narrative part, which, after several modifications of opinion, he credited to a disciple of the apostle John, who was dependent in a degree for his materials on the apostle himself.

Wendt, a scholar of an excellent spirit, standing in his theological opinions at an opposite pole from Renan, reverses this allotment. He assigns to the discourses in the Gospel the same relation to the entire book which many critics are disposed to ascribe to the Logia in relation to the entire Matthew.<sup>2</sup> A considerable portion of the record of the teaching of Jesus, including the principal parts of the final discourses, is thought by Wendt to have been written by the apostle, whose sojourn in Asia Minor is recognized as a fact. On the basis of this apostolic source, it is conceived that a Christian disciple afterward—possibly, but not probably, prior to the apostle's death—composed the Gospel as it now stands. In it the teachings in the apostolic document are modified and enlarged to accord with the shape which the tradition had assumed in the circle of Asia Minor Christians, and the unwritten tradition of the narrative matter is added in the form which it had acquired among them. Various changes and supplements, it is said, belong to what is termed "*second* evangelic tradition," traces of which, it is argued, are discernible in the first and third Gospels, as contrasted with Mark.

Wendt believes that the Evangelist is correct as to some prominent controverted points, such as the self-designation (but within narrow limits) of the apostolic author, the longer duration of the ministry of Jesus, the journeys repeatedly (*manchmals*) made by him to Jerusalem,

this entire verse has been a part of the Gospel as far back as anything is known of it. It is in truth a "Zeugniss"—a testimony. The clause "wrote these things" is a part of it. It is agreed that it refers to John the apostle. It comes from those whose testimony could only commend itself to acceptance by being known to emanate from persons who had stood in connection with the apostle.

<sup>1</sup> The different forms of the partition-theory are sketched in Mangold-Bleek, *Einkl. in d. N. T.*, p. 185 *seq.*, up to the date of this work (1875).

<sup>2</sup> Wendt's exposition of his views is given in his *Die Lehre Jesu* (1886-1890). He has presented a clear and compact restatement in *Das Johannes-evangelium, Eine Untersuchung*, etc. (1900).

his prolonged Judean teaching, the date of the crucifixion, and (not improbably) the association of the first disciples, including John, with John the Baptist, and their acquaintance thus made with Jesus. But we are told that in the completed Gospel there is no small admixture of unhistorical circumstances, as well as of doctrinal matter, which are additions of the Evangelist. As a whole, we have a history the authentic portions of which must be dissected out of it by the skilful manipulation of the critic. The prologue is cited as one instance in which proof of interpolation can be discerned. Certain sentences which are alleged to be Philonian ideas of the Logos, are said to be insertions in the apostolic source, which said nothing of the personal preëxistence of the Logos or of the agency of the Logos in the work of creation.

It is natural to ask where the narrative parts which the other Gospels do not contain, and which, it is contended, are in conflict with them, come from. The same question occurs respecting the portion of teaching which, it is maintained, is not consistent with contents of the authentic document from the apostle's own hand.

Wendt absolutely acquits the Evangelist of any intention to deceive. The Gospel is no product of a doctrinal party or bias. It is not a *freie Dichtung*—a product of the imagination.<sup>1</sup> The Evangelist may himself have been a hearer of the apostle John. At any rate, he worked on oral communications from the apostle.<sup>2</sup> The latter had lived for many years in the circle of Asia Minor Christians.<sup>3</sup> The special interest felt in John at Ephesus is manifest. The Evangelist belonged to the circle in which John had lived.<sup>4</sup> "With what reverent interest (*pietätvollem Interesse*) they may have received there the notes in which the apostle had set down his recollections of the conversation, fraught with interest, and the discourses of Jesus."<sup>5</sup> Yet a different set of conceptions, doctrinal and historical, had sprung up, independently of the apostles, in that Christian community, when the Evangelist wrote—which Wendt thinks was probably in the first quarter of the second century—that community where the apostle was so revered and his teachings, oral and written—in great part *written*—were so prized and cherished.<sup>6</sup> Somehow, without suspecting it, his disciples had lost an important part of their real import. Unconsciously and artlessly (*unbefangen*) they had carried their own ideas over into the words of the apostle! The hypothesis of

<sup>1</sup> *Das Johannesevangel.*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>4</sup> p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 222, 223.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> p. 218.

Wendt comprises in it inconsistent conjectures. These are supported by details of criticism, sometimes plausible, always sincere, but usually suggested by supposed difficulties which admit of fair solutions not implying the theory which the author favors.<sup>1</sup>

It is for competent judges to decide whether the acceptance of this and every other partition theory is not precluded by the identity of style, both in expression and thought, between the Gospel and the First Epistle. As to the Gospel, Neander's remark that it was produced "*aus einem Gusse*"—at one cast—stands as the judgment of a scholar of acute perception and of deep spiritual insight. What Strauss said of the Gospel, that it is a "seamless garment," is the verdict of a proficient in the literary art who, so far as this verdict is concerned, could not have been swayed by prejudice. The partition theory would make it criss-crossed with seams. In following the suggested lines of demarcation, we soon become conscious that we are walking on slippery ground. Certainly the same sort of procedure might be made to appear equally, and even more, plausible, if applied to numerous other productions in history and in other branches of literature, the unity of which nobody questions. In a portion of Wendt's list of instances of a "broken connection" in the records of the discourses of Christ, a break is not recognized even by such opponents of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel as Jülicher and Smiedel. In certain passages Haupt, who dissents in general from the positions of Wendt, is disposed to agree with him as to the phenomena. His explanation, however, is wholly different, and is deserving of more attention than it has received. It is that the apostle, in setting forth the objections from the side of the Jews, and their refutation by Jesus, has occasionally taken the same course as that taken by Matthew—for example, in the case of the Sermon on the Mount. That is to say, with the statement of what was said at a particular time or place, the apostle has now and then connected sayings uttered by them or by him on the same topic, but on other occasions. There is no need of bringing in another writer than the

<sup>1</sup> A very able review of Wendt's hypothesis by Haupt, in the *Studien u. Kritiken* (1893, Heft 2), discusses adversely his arguments, especially the exegetical passages in support of his position. A good example of Haupt's comments is his answer to Wendt's interpretation of the terms *σημεῖα* and *ἔργα* in the fourth Gospel, and to the inferences drawn from them. (Haupt, p. 238 *seq.*)

apostle, — a solution which is improbable. If it were another writer, he would naturally locate his addition elsewhere, instead of piecing out the words of Jesus by an invented supplement. In order to hold the non-apostolic Evangelist responsible for “dislocations,” it is suggested by Wendt that he was dealing with the apostolic source from memory, not having it in his hand — a supposition, of course, unsupported by proof.<sup>1</sup>

Wendt recognizes the evidence of the influence of the apostle John’s teaching on Ignatius and on Justin. He thinks it remarkable, however, that their allusions should be to passages which belong in the apostolic source rather than in the narrative portion of the Gospel. But here is the passage in Justin (*Dial.* 88): “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” etc. (John i. 20, 21, 27). The reference of this quotation to some other source than the fourth Gospel would strike one, in a less sincere writer, as a makeshift. The reasonable presumption is, that it is taken from the narrative in John. Considering the aims of Ignatius, and his themes, we see that he would naturally refer to teachings in the Gospel rather than incidents. The same is true of Justin. The fact that Tatian, the pupil of Justin, in his *Diatesseron*, combined the fourth Gospel with the other three, thereby implying that it was held to be equal in authority, makes it most unlikely that Justin was not acquainted with it or was of a different mind.

The partition theories are excluded by the definite and emphatic testimony at the end of the Gospel. To the Gospel as a whole this testimony refers when it says that the author “wrote these things.” This is not questioned by Wendt. His explanation is, that as the Logia of Matthew at the basis of the first Gospel caused his name to be attached to the entire book, so it was with the apostolic source in relation to the fourth Gospel. The cases are not parallel. For one thing, there is no definite assertion of this sort at the end of the first Gospel. In the case before us, we have an explicit declaration which has been a part of the Gospel since its first promulgation.

It comes from the circle of John’s disciples, as is shown in the plural: “We know that his witness is true.” In the closing verse, which is apparently from the same writer, he resumes the first person: “I suppose that the world would not contain,” etc., — an expression of the wonder and enthusiasm which the fulness of material contained in the life and works of Jesus awakened in his mind.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 15.

It is conceivable that the external evidence, cogent as it appears, for the genuineness of the fourth Gospel should be outweighed by internal proofs of an opposite tenor. This branch of the discussion we have now to consider.

Under this head the first fact to be mentioned is that the author of the Gospel was a Hebrew, not one of foreign birth, but a Palestinian. This is evident from the linguistic character of the book. It is altogether peculiar. The Greek was not the writer's vernacular; it was an acquired tongue. This has been clearly illustrated by Lightfoot,<sup>1</sup> and has been elucidated by Ewald,<sup>2</sup> who says:

"It is quite worthy of notice that the Greek language of the author carries in it the clearest and strongest marks of a genuine Hebrew who was born in the Holy Land, and in that society grew up without speaking Greek, and who even in the midst of the Greek garb which he learned to wrap about him, still keeps the whole spirit and breadth of his mother-tongue, and has no scruples in letting himself be guided by it. The Greek language of our Gospel, to be sure, has not so strong a Hebrew color as that of the older Gospels; it has taken up more genuine Greek traits. But in its real spirit and tone no style could be more genuinely Hebrew than our author's. Since, nevertheless, even in his linguistic peculiarity, he has not cast aside his characteristically creative power and movement, there has originated with him a Greek which is peculiar, and has nothing like it elsewhere even among writings which are tinged with the Hebrew. Only the time, the biographical facts, and all the characteristics of the apostle John can explain the originality of this Greek style."

The impression made on the ordinary reader by the sceptical criticism on this subject of the nativity of the author is a good deal due to the frequent use of the Greek word "Logos" instead of "Word," its proper rendering. Enough has been said as to the strong Hebraic coloring of the author's style. The conceptions that often recur in the Gospel, as "life," "light," "truth," are drawn from the circle of Old Testament thought. The authority of the Old Testament, the inspiration of Moses and the Prophets, are assumed.<sup>3</sup> With the characteristic features of the Messianic

<sup>1</sup> Lecture on the "Internal Evidence for the Johannine Authorship," in *The Expositor*, for January, February, and March, 1890. Also, with full details, *Biblical Essays*, pp. 16, 126.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald, *Die Johannischen Schriften*, vol. i. pp. 44 seq. Ewald on this point is an authority of the first rank.

<sup>3</sup> i. 45, iii. 14, v. 46, vi. 32, vii. 38, viii. 56, x. 35, xii. 14 seq., 37 seq., xv. 25, xix. 23 seq., 28, 35, 36, 37, xx. 31.



expectation the author is quite familiar. The same is true of Jewish opinions and customs generally; for example, the usages connected with marriage and with the burial of the dead. Witness his acquaintance with the prejudice against conversing with women (iv. 27), with the mutual hatred of Jews and Samaritans (iv. 9), with the opinion that deformity or suffering implies sin (ix. 2). He is intimately conversant with Jewish observances, as is seen in what he says of "the last day of the feast" (vii. 37) — that is, the day added to the original seven — of the wedding at Cana, of the burial of Lazarus. We have seen that the allusions to the topography of the Holy Land come from one personally conversant with the places. He knows how to distinguish Cana of Galilee from another place, of more consequence, of the same name (ii. 1, 11). Of the Sea of Galilee, the passage across, and the paths on its shores, he has an accurate recollection. The same is seen at the opening of ch. iv., in the reference to the Valley of Sychem. He has in his mind the image of the Pavement, or platform on which Pilate's chair was placed, with its Hebrew name, Gabbatha (xix. 13).

It is agreed on all sides that the Gospel stands in a special and peculiar relation to one apostle.<sup>1</sup> That apostle is admitted, with no dissent that merits attention, to be the apostle John.<sup>2</sup> But the name of the apostle who is thus prominent is not mentioned.

The mention of it is purposely avoided, a circumlocution standing in the room of it. At the Last Supper, there reclined on the bosom of Jesus "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (xiii. 23). To him, designated in the same terms, Jesus commits the care of his mother (xiv. 26). This disciple — "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" (xx. 2) — goes with Peter to the tomb of Jesus. Once more (xxi. 7) he is designated in the same way. He it is who is termed "another disciple," and "that other disciple" (xviii. 15, 16; compare xx. 2, 3, 4, 8). Unquestionably he is the "one of the two" whose name is not given, the associate of Andrew (i. 40). In the appendix to the Gospel (xxi. 24; compare vs. 20), he is explicitly declared to be its writer.<sup>3</sup> That he was one of those who had personally known Jesus is left to be inferred, yet it *must* be inferred from his use of the first person plural

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Weizsäcker, *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, 2d ed. p. 513.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 513 seq.

<sup>3</sup> The passage will bear no other interpretation. Weizsäcker says (*Das Apostol. Zeitalt.*, p. 535) that it need not be taken literally, but as simply meaning that the apostle was the ultimate source. This will not do.

of the pronoun. In the Prologue (i. 14), it is said, "We beheld his glory," etc. This cannot be understood to denote simply a spiritual, mystic vision. It is of the incarnate Christ, Christ in the flesh, that the writer is speaking. In the First Epistle the language is: "That which we beheld and our hands handled." If this does mean literal sense-perception, verified by touch as well as by sight, how could the author express such a fact if he wanted to?<sup>1</sup> The author of both writings is one and the same. Which of the disciples is meant in all these passages? Not Peter, since Peter is not only mentioned by name in various places but is also expressly distinguished from him. It was an apostle not lower in rank than Peter. It was not James; James was put to death early in the apostolic age (Acts xii. 2 *seq.*). Beyond doubt the apostle whose name is suppressed is John. Why is he referred to in this indirect way? If the author was recording events in which he himself had a prominent part, he might prefer to present the narrative in this objective way. Like examples in literature are not wanting. That he had to bring out his close intimacy with Jesus might be another motive for this reserve.<sup>2</sup> It is worthy of remark that not even the name of his brother James is to be found in the Gospel. These motives it ought not to be difficult to comprehend. One appeal in the Gospel to ocular testimony calls for special notice. After stating that one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus and that there came out blood and water, the Evangelist says (xix. 35, Revised Version): "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." Does the Evangelist make an appeal to another witness separate from himself, who is said to be conscious of the truth of his own testimony; or does he appeal "to his own actual experience, now solemnly recorded for the instruction of his readers?" The question is thus clearly put by Westcott, who deals with it in a very intelligent and convincing manner:<sup>3</sup> "The last alternative has generally been accepted, and on good grounds, that is, the Evangelist speaks of himself in the third person. There are examples of this usage in classical writers. In John ix. 37, there is a like instance. Jesus says, 'Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.' If the author of the Gospel could use the first clause . . . of himself, there can be no reasonable doubt that he could also use of himself the particular pronoun which occurs in the second clause." "To resume and emphasize the reference," the author elsewhere uses

<sup>1</sup> Futile attempts to avoid this interpretation are answered by B. Weiss, *Die drei Briefe d. Apostels Johannes, ad loc.* Parallel statements of sense-perception, in the Gospel, are i. 32, 38, iv. 35, vi. 5, xi. 45. The difficulty of attaching any other meaning to these two passages (John i. 14 and 1 Ep. John i. 1) is recognized by McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 616.

<sup>2</sup> See another suggestion on the phrase "whom Jesus loved," Appendix, Note 16.

<sup>3</sup> *St. John's Gospel*, *Introd.*, p. 26.

this particular pronoun (ch. i. 18; ch. v. 38). A few verses before the record of this act of the soldier (vv. 26, 27), "the Evangelist is presented as a historical figure in the scene." When, recalling the scene, he comes to this incident in which he was deeply interested, it is quite natural that he should pause and "separate himself as the witness from his immediate position as a writer. In this mental attitude, he looks from without upon himself (*ἐκείνος*) as affected at that memorable moment by the fact which he records, in order that it may now create in others the faith (*πιστεύητε*) which it had created in his own soul." Moreover, it was not a witness that was given at one time; the tense is the perfect ("it has been given"); and, further, it continues to be given ("he knoweth that he saith true"). It is given "that ye may believe." The other interpretation, as Westcott remarks, is pointless. It would make the passage nothing but an emphatic appeal to an unknown witness who is said to be conscious of the truthfulness of his own testimony. If the passage had stood, *He that hath seen hath borne witness, that ye also may believe*, nobody would have doubted that the reference of the writer was to himself; but the intercalated clauses do not interfere in the least with this interpretation. The language chosen by the Evangelist grows out of his sense of the solemnity of the attestation which he is giving.<sup>1</sup>

That the author of the Gospel signifies to his readers that he is giving his personal testimony appears evident from the passages adduced above. The truth of this profession is confirmed by the appended attestation from another hand (John xxi. 24).<sup>2</sup> If it

<sup>1</sup> "... um mit besonderer Feierlichkeit die Wahrhaftigkeit seines Zeugnisses zu versichern." (Weiss-Meyer, *ad loc.*) See also Weiss, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 560.

Zahn thinks that "he" (*ἐκείνος*) that "knoweth" is Christ. He refers to certain passages as illustrative (John ix. 37; i. 34, especially 1 John ii. 6, iii. 5, 7, 16). See Zahn, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, vol. ii. pp. 172 *seq.* But the interpretation given above is better fitted to the language and is quite satisfactory.

Baur regards the Evangelist as speaking of himself as the witness. But he would construe this alleged perception of spiritual objects as a kind of mystical, spiritual discernment, — an intuition of spiritual effects to follow the death of Christ. This is to confound plain prose with poesy. The solemn tone of the assertion does not cohere with such a view of it. If the Evangelist did not see what he emphatically avers that he did see, his misstatement must have a worse source than what the critic calls "die Macht der Idee."

<sup>2</sup> It is certainly surprising, as all must confess, that there is no mention of Zebedee and his sons, except in a row of names of apostles in the appendix (xxi. 1, 2). Whether this appended chapter as far as the 24th verse was from the pen of the apostle or from disciples of the apostle (or one of them) by whom the Gospel was sent forth, is still an open question. It is not easy to

be not the apostle who writes the Gospel, it is not easy to escape the inference that deceit is intended. If so, it is a different sort of deceit from that which characterizes the pseudonymous writings with which we are acquainted. There is none of that *naïveté* of the authors of this species of literature, which constitutes the sole apology that can be made for them. They do not set a trap for the reader. They do not in a sly way entice him to connect the book with its pretended author. They betray, as they feel, no hesitation in assuming his name. On the contrary, if the apostle John was not the author, it is difficult to escape the conviction that an artful device is carried from the beginning to the end of the book. The writer not only pretends to be the apostle, but in order to succeed in this aim affects modesty. He puts himself side by side with Peter, leans on the breast of Jesus, goes to his sepulchre, stands before the cross, there to have the mother of the Lord committed to his charge, but, in order to mislead his readers more effectually, takes pains to avoid writing the name of John,—except when he speaks of the Baptist—whose usual title, however, he suppresses,—doing thus from cunning what John the apostle, being of the same name and a disciple of the Baptist, might do naturally.

*Then the Gospel is virtually an autobiography.*—It professes to tell the story of the origin and development of the author's personal faith in Jesus as the divine Son of God. It is the grounds of his own faith which he wishes to set forth, his purpose being to inspire others with the same faith, or to confirm them in it. After a short preface, a glowing avowal of the faith which had brought joy to his soul, he enters upon the story of its genesis and growth. Why not recount the very facts which were really the source of this faith in his heart? Why betake himself to fables? Did he imagine that the words and works of Christ, which had

decide. If the latter alternative is adopted, it is not difficult, since the disciple had the Gospel in his hand, to account for his falling into a similar style, and for his keeping up the designation of John as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," etc., instead of speaking of him by name. But this question of the authorship of the first twenty-three verses is one on which critics of all schools are pretty evenly divided. There appears to be no good reason for attributing the closing (twenty-fifth) verse to still another disciple. In the twenty-fourth he speaks for the group of John's disciples—"we know," etc.; in the twenty-fifth he expresses an individual feeling.

actually evoked faith in his own soul, required to be reënforced by fiction?<sup>1</sup>

The fact of the personal love of the author of the Gospel to Jesus appears irreconcilable with the supposition that the narrative is non-apostolic. It is evident that the author regards Jesus with a warm personal affection. Whom does he love? Is it an unreal person, the offspring of philosophical speculation? The person whom he loves is the historic Jesus. Of him he says, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled."<sup>2</sup> He is conscious that he had been specially an object of the love of Jesus,—"the disciple whom Jesus loved." To Jesus he is consciously united by the closest tie of personal friendship. Did the author picture to himself a character, and then, conceiving of him as an actual person who had said and done what imagination had attributed to him, concentrate on this ideal creation the heart's deepest love?

Does not the tender simplicity which marks so many passages of the narrative stamp them with the seal of truth? The record of the tears of Jesus on witnessing the sorrow of Mary and her friends; the saying that, as death approached, having loved his disciples, "he loved them to the end"; the pathetic words "Behold thy mother," "Behold thy son," which were spoken from the cross—is not the verity of these accounts evident of itself?

It has frequently been urged that the catholic tone of the author, and, in particular, his method of speaking of "the Jews" as of an alien body, are not consistent with the character and position of the apostle John. We must bear in mind, however, that John is never represented in the apostolic history as a Judaizer. He gave the right hand of fellowship to the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 9), and in the Jerusalem conference (Acts xv.) he stands in the background. He is not writing at that earlier time when the Jewish Christians were keeping up the observances of the temple, and hoping for a vast influx of converts from their countrymen. The temple lay in ruins. The full meaning of the Master, when he said, "In this place is one greater

<sup>1</sup> See Lecture of Dr. T. Dwight, in *Boston Lectures* (1871).

<sup>2</sup> I John i. 1. The identity of authorship between the Epistle and the Gospel, as we have said, is established not only by the tradition but by convincing internal evidence.



than the temple" (Matt. xii. 6), had been opened to his disciples by the startling lessons of Providence and by the teaching of the Spirit. The rejection of Jesus the Messiah by the mass of the Jews, which long before had so deeply afflicted the apostle Paul, was now a palpable fact. The bitter antipathy of the Jews to the Church had broken out, as the Jewish war approached, in acts of violence. At an earlier time persecution of the Jewish Christians by the Jews is referred to by Paul (1 Thess. ii. 14), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 32-35). In the year 44, Herod Agrippa I., a rigid Jew, had seized and killed John's own brother, James. About a score of years later — Hegesippus places the event just before the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian — even James the Just, the brother of Jesus, who had been least of all obnoxious to Jewish zealots, was stoned to death by the fanatical populace and their leaders. It is probable that it was on the eve of the breaking out of the war with the Romans, that not only John, but a company of disciples, including in their number one or more of the other apostles, went to Asia. There, in the midst of the Gentile churches, at Ephesus where Paul had previously labored, the apostle John survived for many years. He must have been in truth a dull spectator not to have discovered the meaning of the events which made the significance of Christianity and its real relation to the Old Testament religion and people as clear as noonday. His must have been an obtuse mind indeed, if, even independently of special enlightenment from above, what Jesus had said respecting the spiritual and catholic nature of true religion and of his kingdom had not been brought vividly home to his recollection, and its import opened to his vision in the light of the catastrophe which had demolished the Jewish sanctuary and state, and of the implacable hostility which had driven him and his fellow-disciples as outcasts into the bosom of the churches that Paul had planted among the heathen.

What is the attitude of this Gospel toward the religion and the people of the old covenant? Is mention made of "the Jews"? The same phrase is on the lips of Paul,<sup>1</sup> whose ardent love to his countrymen made him willing himself, were it possible, to perish for them. The author of the fourth Gospel is a reverent believer in Moses and the prophets (i. 47, iv. 22, x. 35). It is from his report that we are informed of the pregnant words of Jesus, "Salvation is of the Jews"

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 13, 14: "the Jews' religion."

(iv. 22). Jesus is represented as having come to "his own" (i. 11). The Jews were "his own" in a peculiar sense. Their refusal to receive him is to the author's mind in the highest degree pathetic. If the ecclesiastical tradition respecting the date of the Gospel and the place and circumstances of its composition is not discarded, there is nothing in the tone of the author to hinder us from believing that he was John the apostle.

If the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel is to be disproved, it must be on the ground of countervailing evidence to be gathered from other New Testament documents.

It has been insisted that the same author could not have written both the Apocalypse and the Gospel. This is an objection which merits candid attention. It is true that the differences in style, and in the style of thought, between these two books are such that both could hardly have been composed at the same time, certainly not in the same mood of feeling. But if we suppose altered circumstances and an interval of time, the case is different. That an author who, under the passionate emotions roused in him by the outburst of Jewish and heathen persecutions, in the mood of prophetic exaltation, had written the Revelation, should compose, twenty or thirty years later, works like the Gospel and the First Epistle, is not impossible. The cruelty of Nero may have stirred up unrecorded outbreaks of persecution elsewhere. The Tübingen critics erroneously attributed to the Apocalypse a judaizing and anti-Pauline spirit. But the same critics themselves pointed out marked affinities between the Gospel and the Apocalypse. Baur even styled the Gospel a spiritualized (*vergeistigte*) Apocalypse. In truth, in the book of Revelation there are no traces of Jewish exclusiveness. A more careful exegesis disproves the imputation of such a spirit.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that in the Revelation Christ is called "the Word [*Logos*] of God" (Rev. xix. 13). Certainly weight is to be attached to the statement of Irenæus that the Apocalypse appeared "in the end of Domitian's reign";<sup>2</sup> yet he does not, as regards the question of the date, refer, as he does concerning the authorship of the Gospel, to personal testimonies. For the earlier date, the age of Nero, there are not wanting strong internal proofs.<sup>3</sup> By not a few writers who favor the later date for the book in its present form, but regard it as a composite work,

<sup>1</sup> On this topic, see Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, v. 30, 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Rev. xi. 1 *seq.*, xvii. 9-11.

the force of this evidence and the earlier date of important portions, or of the nucleus, of it are admitted.<sup>1</sup>

The many instances of a mistaken rejection, on internal grounds, of the tradition of authorship in the case of literary works certainly afford a needed lesson of caution to critics. One striking instance may be adduced as an example. Dr. Edward Zeller, a son-in-law of Baur, was one of the ablest expositors and defenders of his theological positions, including the "entweder — oder," or the dilemma which was insisted on, that either the Apocalypse or the Gospel, one or the other, is not the production of the apostle John. Zeller, in his earlier work on Greek philosophy, the *Platonische Studien*, maintained that "Leges" is not a genuine writing of Plato. This he did on the basis of both style and contents, and on very plausible grounds, notwithstanding that its genuineness is attested by Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> But Zeller, in his able work, *Die Philosophie d. Griechen*,<sup>3</sup> retreats from this positive opinion. He suggests that if it could be believed that the "Leges" were a work of Plato, unfinished by him, but worked over and filled out by a pupil, the difficulty would be lessened — a conception, by the way, very like one of the hypotheses respecting the fourth Gospel. But the difficulty, he still feels, would not be removed. In the later edition, however, of the same work, Zeller, finding the testimony of Aristotle and other considerations of too great weight, retracts altogether his earlier contention, and accepts the "Laws"

<sup>1</sup> See Harnack, *Chronologie*, etc., vol. i. p. 245; Briggs, *The Messiah of the Apostles*, ch. ix. p. 303. Dr. Briggs ascribes to the apostle John "the apocalypse of the epistles of the seven churches and all matter related thereto." "On this view," says Professor Stevens (*i.e.* the view that the book is the growth of successive contributions), "the apostle might well have compiled and published one or more editions of it." "By this theory the phenomena which favor an earlier, and those which favor a later, date could be accounted for as well as the apparent combination of Jewish and Christian elements" (*The Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 526, 527). Professor F. C. Porter, in the learned article, "Revelation, Book of," in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, favors the later date for the book in its present compass.

Professor Ramsay, who is of the same opinion, comparing the Apocalypse with the Gospel and First Epistle of John, judges that "there is a closer relation between the three works than exists between them and any fourth work" (*The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 303).

<sup>2</sup> Some of the characteristics of the "Laws," in contrast with those of the other Dialogues, are described in Jowett's translation of Plato, vol. iv., Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Th. I. § 24.

as the genuine production of Plato in his later life. Panætius, a noted Stoic philosopher at Athens, went so far as to reject the Phædon as not being the work of Plato. He admired Plato, but disbelieving in the immortality of the soul, he thought that the main proposition and the arguments of this Dialogue are unworthy of the philosopher to whom it is ascribed. Then, as Grote observes, he was probably influenced by a singularity in the Phædon—it being the only dialogue in which the author mentions himself in the third person,<sup>1</sup>—a point, it may be remarked, in which the Phædon resembles the fourth Gospel. As to the rejection of the “Laws,” on internal grounds, Grote says: “There are few dialogues in the list against which stronger objections on internal grounds can be brought than against *Leges* and *Menexenus*. Yet both of them stand authenticated, beyond all reasonable dispute, as genuine works of Plato, not merely by the canon of Thrasyllus, but also by the testimony of Aristotle.”<sup>2</sup> Grote adds that considering Plato’s long period of philosophic composition and our limited knowledge of the circumstances of his life, “it is surely hazardous to limit the range of his varieties, on the faith of a critical repugnance not merely subjective and fallible, but without entirely modern growth.”<sup>3</sup>

How many readers with no knowledge of the author save what the style of the books permit would say that Carlyle’s *Life of Schiller* (1823–24) and translation of *Wilhelm Meister* (1824) could be from the same pen as *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34) and *Life of Frederick* (1858–65)?

We have now to test the character of the fourth Gospel by a more detailed scrutiny of its contents. We have seen that according to this theory, of which Baur was the most eminent sponsor, this Gospel was the development of a theological idea, fervently cherished by the unknown author, yet appropriated by him from Alexandrian sources and interwoven by him both with imaginary teachings of Jesus and with allegorical facts likewise imaginary.

The first question is whether the narrative portions of the Gospel furnish a proof for this theory. Not to dwell on the strain which is required in so many instances to match the allegory to the narrative, the theory is confuted by the abundant evidences of a distinct historical feeling and point of view on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> Grote’s *Plato*, i. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

writer. No critic has shown this more effectively than Renan, despite his *a priori* incredulity in respect to everything that partakes of the miraculous.<sup>1</sup>

Before citing some of his observations, certain of the indirect indications that the Evangelist speaks from personal recollection may be pointed out. "And it was at Jerusalem at the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (x. 22, 23). Why should it be mentioned that Jesus was in this porch? Nothing in the context called for it. How account for its being mentioned except on the supposition that the scene was pictured in the author's memory? Stating this fact, he must needs explain to heathen readers why Jesus walked in this sheltered place: "it was winter." The festival occurred in December. When Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment" (xii. 3).<sup>2</sup> A similar personal reminiscence is in John viii. 20. The brazen chests constituting the "treasury" the author had seen. The image of Jesus as he stood near them was stamped on his memory. Why should he refer to "Ænon," where John was baptizing, as being "near to Salim" (iii. 23)? Why should he describe the pool at Jerusalem as being by the sheep-gate, as called in the Hebrew "Bethesda," and as having five porches (v. 2)? Why give the number of porches? Chronological statements, some of them defining not only the day but the hour, are frequent. They come in, not as if they had been picked up to be wrought in, but as a spontaneous reminiscence. "It was about the tenth hour" (i. 39): "For John was not yet cast into prison" (iii. 24) — these are examples. For what reason is Philip designated (xii. 21) as "of Bethsaida of Galilee," when the connected incident does not call for any such local specification? What reason is there for adding to the statement that Pilate sat down in his judgment-seat the remark that the place "is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha"? What can this be but an instance of local description, natural in referring to a spot where a man has witnessed a memorable event? What reason for the mention of the visit of Jesus to Capernaum (John ii. 11), save as a personal reminiscence?<sup>3</sup>

Renan is often struck with marks of historical verity in the Gospel.

"Whence come particulars, so exact, upon Philip, upon the country of Andrew and Peter, and especially about Nathanael? Nathanael

<sup>1</sup> *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed. Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> In the account of a landing of certain passengers from the *Mayflower* before the whole company disembarked at Plymouth, it is said that while on the land they filled their boat with juniper. The writer says of the juniper, it "smelled very sweet and strong" and "we burnt the most part of it while we lay there" — a feature in the description which shows of itself that he was one of them.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, Note 17, p. 412.



belongs to this Gospel alone. I cannot regard traits so precise which pertain to him, as inventions originating a hundred years after the time of Jesus and far away from Palestine. If he is a symbolic personage, why does the writer take the trouble to inform us that he is of Cana of Galilee, a city which the Evangelist appears to be particularly well acquainted with?" "Why should our Evangelist speak repeatedly of Cana of Galilee, a small city, extremely obscure? Why should he want to create, too late, a celebrity for this little borough, which certainly semi-Gnostic Christians of Asia Minor had no motive for remembering?"

The whole passage from ch. i. to ch. iv. 2 appears to Renan to be stamped with tokens of historical truth. He mentions specially the topographical references. Of ch. iv. 3-6, he does not hesitate to say that "none but a Jew of Palestine who had often passed to the entrance of the Valley of Sychem could have written this."

"The verses vii. 1-10 are a little historical treasure. . . . It is here that the symbolic and dogmatic explanation is completely at fault. . . . After this, how can it be said that the personages of the fourth Gospel are types, invented characters, and not living beings in flesh and blood?"

Renan adds — so impressed is he with the verisimilitude of this account — that the fourth Gospel is above the Synoptics "in the evidences afforded of a history and narrative which aim to be exact." Notwithstanding his ingrained disbelief in miracles, he finds unmistakable marks of truth in the Johannean narrative of the relations of Jesus to the sisters of Bethany. Despite the record of the raising of Lazarus, Renan perceives in the entire closing portion of the fourth Gospel, the whole story of the betrayal and passion included, particular marks of accuracy which are superior to such as are found in the Synoptics. The omission by the Synoptics of a notice of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is incidental to the passing over by them of the interval between the Galilean labors of Jesus and the last festival which he attended at Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

Could it be shown that the various parts of the Gospel narrative are artificial, or plainly improbable, its genuineness might be disproved. But interpretations of Baur and of others who agree with him on the main question, by which this is sought to be done, are too often forced upon the text.

<sup>1</sup> "The silence of the Synoptics in regard to the episode at Bethany does not make much of an impression on me. The Synoptics had a very poor knowledge of all that immediately preceded the last week of Jesus. It is not

What, for example, can be more groundless than the opinion of many critics, from Baur to Keim, that, according to this Gospel, Jesus was not baptized? It is strange that any reader, with John i. 32, 33 before him, could ever impute to the Evangelist such an intent. How, it might be added, could the author, whoever he was, expect to destroy the established belief of Christians in a fact like this, embedded as it was in the Gospel tradition? If he were rash enough to set about such a task, how could he hope to succeed by merely omitting to make an explicit record of the circumstance? It was one of the suggestions of the Tübingen critics, in which they have been much followed, that Nicodemus is a person invented to serve as a type of unbelieving, sign-seeking Judaism. Why, then, should he be depicted as attaining more and more faith (iii. 2, vii. 50, xix. 39)? The Samaritan woman, on the contrary, is said to have been created as a type of the believing heathen. With such a design, why was not an actual heathen chosen to play this part, instead of a Samaritan who believed in Moses and was looking for the Messiah?<sup>1</sup> But into the details of exegesis it is impracticable here to enter.<sup>2</sup>

simply the incident [the miracle] at Bethany that is wanting with them ; it is the whole period of the life of Jesus with which this incident is connected. One comes back always to this fundamental point : The question is, Which of the two systems is true, that which makes Galilee the exclusive theatre of the activity of Jesus, or that which makes Jesus pass a part of his life at Jerusalem ?" Of the symbolical explication of the miracle, Renan says : " It is in my judgment erroneous. . . . Our Gospel [the fourth] is not in the least (*nullement*) symbolical." — *Vie de Jésus*, 13th ed., pp. 507, 508.

The miracle at Bethany was not the cause of the crucifixion ; it only led the enemies of Jesus to make haste. Therefore it furnished the Synoptists no special motive for stepping beyond the lines of their narratives. Independently of this event, the animosity of the priests and Pharisees had previously risen to a pitch which made them ready to strike the final blow. Their anxiety as to what would be the influence of the miracle (John xi. 47, 48) simply quickened their steps. The miracle itself in its nature differs not from the instances of raising the dead which are recorded by the Synoptists, for we need not suppose here, any more than in those instances, the absolute disconnection of soul and body.

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion that the five husbands of the Samaritan woman symbolize the five heathen forms of Samaritan worship—in which case her paramour would be spoken of as a symbol of Jehovah!—is itself a freak of fancy.

When it is said that the "disciples had gone away into the city to buy food," it is a strained construction to infer that they *all* went, leaving Jesus quite alone. If it was John who remained with him, he had no need to be informed of these particulars.

<sup>2</sup> For a particular examination of Baur's exegesis of the Gospel, see Bey-schlag (*ut supra*) ; also Brückner's notes to De Wette's *Kurze Erkl. d. Evang. Johann.*, and Fisher's *The Supernatural Origin of Christianity* 3d ed., pp. 132 *seq.*

Critics of the class here referred to have said that the author of this Gospel attaches no value to miracles, setting them up, so to speak, merely to bowl them down. This is an error. As he looks back upon the Saviour's life, he sees the glory of the Son of God in his superhuman works of power and mercy. That which is rebuked in the Gospel is the disposition to see nothing in the miracles except that which excites wonder or ministers to some lower want, instead of discerning their deeper suggestion. Unbelief, even when not denying that they were wrought, failed to look through them. They were a language the import of which was not divined. They were opaque facts. Hence the Jews called for more and more. They clamored for something more stupendous. They must have a "sign from heaven." This is the view taken of miracles in the fourth Gospel. There is not even a remote hint that they are not actual occurrences. The narrator does not stultify himself in this way.

In every instance where Baur appeals to exegesis in support of his idea of the Evangelist's intent in this matter, he is confuted upon closer attention to the passage in hand. For example, when Jesus said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (xx. 29), there is, to be sure, an allusion to the reluctance of Thomas to believe without seeing: but to believe *what*? Why, the miracle of the resurrection, to which the other apostles had testified in his hearing. This was the object of faith. Not on faith independent of miracles, but on faith not dependent on one's own ocular perception of them, Jesus pronounces his blessing.

And here it may be observed that there is no kind of miracle, none calling for the exertion of any species or degree of power, which has not its parallel in the Synoptics. In Mark, Jesus stills the tempest (ch. v.), feeds the multitude (chs. vi., viii.), and raises the dead (ch. v.).

From the historical character and the spirit of the Gospel, we turn to the second branch of this inquiry, its theological aspect. It is contended by Baur and numerous later critics that the conception of the Word (Logos) in the Gospel is appropriated from the Alexandrian Judaism of Philo, and is the idea which gives form and color to its doctrinal contents. These two propositions are really the main fortress on which they rely. Neither of them can be sustained. The structure of which they furnish the materials is, therefore, untenable.

The term "Logos" in the Jewish theology is of Palestinian origin.

In the Old Testament this Word as an abstraction has divine attributes attached to it.<sup>1</sup> The "Word" is personified.<sup>2</sup> It is spoken of as an instrument of creation.<sup>3</sup> "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." "He spake, and the light came into being."<sup>4</sup> He "spake" unto Moses and the prophets. In the Jewish Targums—which in their present form, to be sure, are not earlier than the third century, materials of which, however, go back to the apostolic age—the Word is personal. In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom is personified and described as taking part in the work of creation, being the first creature of God and the typical source of *human* wisdom. In the Old Testament apocryphal books, the Son of Sirach, the author of the original of which was a Hebrew of Palestinian birth, and especially in the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom is personified in a still more vivid way. In the former book, Wisdom is made to say, "I came out of the mouth of the Most High and covered the earth as a cloud";<sup>5</sup> "He created [or preserved] me from the beginning before thy world."<sup>6</sup> The Lord is said to have commanded Wisdom to make her abode in Israel.<sup>7</sup>

The roots of Philo's conception of the Logos were in these Old Testament and apocryphal sources.

But with Philo, along with what was drawn from the wisdom literature, were commingled kindred conceptions of the Logos, derived from Plato, and especially from Stoic teaching. In the prologue of the Gospel, there is nothing that might not have been drawn from Palestinian sources earlier than the apocryphal books referred to. Certain points of resemblance to Philo's teaching may thus be accounted for. But the points of difference from Philo are fundamental.

In the Gospel, the Logos is personal. Not so in Philo. The current of his teaching is of an opposite tenor, and these passages admit of an interpretation consistent with what, generally speaking, is plainly his view.<sup>8</sup> In Philo, Logos usually signifies the Platonic idea of reason. In the

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxiii. 4; cxix. 89; cv.; Is. xl. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cvii. 20; cxlvii. 15; xviii.; Is. lv. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. i.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. xxiv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. xxxiii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. xxiv. 3. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 8.

<sup>8</sup> See Drummond, *The Alexandrian Philosophy of Philo*; Dorner, *Entwicklungsgesch. d. Lehre d. Person Christi*, vol. i. pp. 19, 20 seq. The utmost that can be claimed is that Philo shows a *tendency* to personalize the Logos. But this was not peculiar to Philo or to Alexandria. See Sanday (in review of Schürer), *The Expositor*, 1892, p. 286. Nor is the Logos in Philo eternal, nor even divine, save from the human point of view.

Gospel, this conception does not appear. Once more—and this contrariety is vital—the central thought of the prologue of the Gospel—that of the Incarnation of the Logos—is in conflict with the philosophy of Philo. His system is dualistic. In it matter is alien to the Deity. Nothing could clash more directly with the system of Philo than the Declaration of the Evangelist, “the Logos became flesh” (i. 41). The Judaic gnosticism in which the Incarnation was merely apparent, a temporary connection of the divine Logos with the man Jesus, was the logical outcome of the Philonian speculation. Cerinthus carried out the dualistic theory. He taught that the heavenly Christ joined himself to Jesus at his baptism, but forsook him at the passion. It was Cerinthus, who probably began his career at Alexandria, against whom, it is stated by Irenæus, the apostle John wrote.

It is possible that the use of the term “Logos” by the Evangelist was owing, or partly owing, to its having become familiar in current talk, which in some measure was traceable to the school of Philo. This is a question of minor consequence. The important fact is that, instead of borrowing from Philo the *contents* of the conception, his sources are Biblical, and whatever is non-Biblical in the Alexandrian idea is absent.

It is an eloquent fact that the beginning and end of the statements concerning the Logos are in the few verses of the prologue. It does not appear in the teachings of Jesus that follow. However, and for whatever reason, the *designation* may have been selected, the *idea* the Evangelist derives from the impression made by Jesus and by his testimony respecting himself. The confident assertion, often as it is made, that the prologue and theology of the Gospel are of Alexandrian origin, is not supported by the evidence.<sup>1</sup> The verdict of ecclesiastical history is decisively against it.

The following are observations of Harnack :—

“The reference to Philo and Hellenism does not avail in the least to explain satisfactorily even the external side of the problem. No Greek speculations respecting the divine nature have had an influence in the Johannean theology. Even the Logos has little more in common with the Philonian Logos than the name.” It is “out of the old faith of

<sup>1</sup> In favor of a predominant influence of Philo in the Gospel are: Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*, vol. i. pp. 336 *seq.*; Weizsäcker, *Das Apostol. Zeitalter*, 2d ed., p. 531; Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch d. N. T. Theologie*, vol. ii. pp. 368 *seq.* Also Aal, *Der Logos* (1886, 1889), and Grill, *Untersuchh. ü. d. Entsteh. d. 4ten Evangel.* (1902).



prophets and apostles" that "the apostolic testimony concerning Christ has created a new faith in one who lived among Greeks. . . . Even this proves incontestably that the author, despite pronounced anti-Judaism, must be regarded as being a born Jew."

"The prologue," Harnack proceeds to say, "is not the key to the understanding of the Gospel, but it prepares in advance the Hellenic readers for the understanding of it. It makes a connection with a great conception, that of the Logos, with which they were acquainted, remoulds and transforms it—by implication combating false Christologies—in order to substitute for it Jesus Christ, the only begotten God (*μονογενης θεός*), or to unveil the Logos as being this Jesus Christ. The moment this is done the Logos conception is dropped. The author speaks in the narrative only of Jesus, with the purpose to establish the faith that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. This faith has for its chief element the recognition that Jesus comes forth (*stammt*) from God and from heaven; but the author is far from attempting to produce this recognition in a philosophical way, by cosmological views. It is on the ground of his testimony respecting himself, and because he has brought the full knowledge of God and Life—brought absolutely super-terrestrial, divine blessings (*Güter*)—that Jesus, according to the Evangelist, shows himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God."<sup>1</sup> "I believe," says the same author, "that I am right in asserting that it would never have occurred to any one to identify the Johannine Christ with the Alexandrian or with any personified divine Logos, if this identification had not been made in the prologue."<sup>2</sup>

Another master in the field of church history, Professor Loofs, writes thus:—

"It is no matter where the word 'Logos,' used by John, may have come from. Of what was possible on Palestinian ground, too little in connection with this question, in my opinion, has been said: compare Son of Sirach xxiv. not only with John i. 1-18, but also with viii. 37 *seq.* and xv. 1 *seq.*" Loofs shows that with John the Logos conception is not connected with philosophical thoughts. His idea is that "in Christ the Word of God which called the world into being and all along has been the life and light of men, has become a human person; that Christ not only brings God's Word, he is it; he is the God become visible and apprehensible (John i. 14; 1 John i. 1)."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, 3d ed., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschr. für Theol. u. Kirche*, vol. i. 2, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> *Real Encykl. d. Theol. u. Kirche*, 3d. ed., vol. iv. p. 29 (art. "Christologie").

Dr. E. A. Abbott (in the art. "Gospels," *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. x.) traces various passages in John to Philo. But why go so far, when the Old Testament fur-

An English scholar, as eminent for his candor as for his learning, speaking of the essential harmony of the conception of the person of Christ in John with the doctrine of Paul and with the conception in the Epistle to the Hebrews, remarks, "We can well understand how almost any strong wind might blow in the direction of the apostle [John] the one luminous word for which we may suppose him to be seeking."<sup>1</sup>

The preëxistence of Christ and his cosmical relation, his agency in the creation, are plainly taught in 1 Cor. viii. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6. Scepticism respecting the Pauline authorship of the Colossians and Ephesians is steadily giving way under the weight of evidence for their genuineness. In these writings, in Colossians especially, the exaltation of Christ and his broad, universal relation are set forth, to serve as an antidote to a Judaizing theosophy with which was connected a worship of angels. Certain passages in Colossians and Ephesians have suggested that the Evangelist was not unacquainted with the apostle Paul's teaching. But there

nishes abundant materials suggestive of the imagery which is contained in every passage to which Dr. Abbot refers? The Evangelist's account of the visit of the Samaritan woman to the well (ch. iv.) is said to remind us of Philo's contrast between Hagar at the well and Rebekah (*Posterity of Cain*, xli.). Why, then, does the Evangelist make the woman carry a pitcher, like Rebekah, while in Philo one point of the contrast is that she carries a "leathern bag"? The reader who will consult an English concordance under the words "well," "wells," "water," "waters," "living water," "fountain," "fountains," "drink," will see how much closer the parallels are between John iv. and the Old Testament than between that chapter and Philo. For example, for "wells of salvation," see Isa. xii. 2; compare Prov. x. 11, xvi. 22, xviii. 4. For "fountain of living water," see Jer. ii. 13; compare Isa. lviii. 11; Jer. xvii. 13; Cant. iv. 15. See also Rev. xxi. 6, which will not be attributed to Philo. "Ye drink; but ye are not filled with drink" (Hag. i. 6). As for the figurative use of "bread," the suggestions in the Old Testament are numerous. For the expression "bread of heaven," see Ps. cv. 40; compare Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, 20.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Sanday, *The Expositor* (1892), p. 287. McGiffert judges correctly (*Apostolic Age*, p. 488, n. 2): "Aside from the term 'Logos,' which is confined to the prologue, there is no trace of Philo's term 'Logos.' In fact there is more than one passage which runs exactly counter to all Philo's thinking (cf., e.g., vi. 37, 44, 66, x. 29). In the light of this fact, the use of the term 'Logos' proves little. It was doubtless already widely current in Hellenistic circles, and the author adopted it and put it in the fore part of his Gospel, simply because he was convinced that all that his contemporaries found in the Logos, he and his fellow-disciples actually had in Christ in visible form."

is no such resemblance between the Gospel and the Pauline Epistles as to imply that the Evangelist was dependent for his doctrine upon the apostle. Nothing is more precarious than inferences of this sort drawn from phraseology in which "light" furnishes a basis for metaphor.

It is the union of the independence of the Gospel with its unsought harmony with the theology of Paul that is an impressive fact. This appears, not only in the conception of the person of Christ, but in various other particulars. John teaches that "life" begins here, in the knowledge of God and of his Son (John iii. 36; 1 John v. 12). Life inseparable from fellowship with Christ is the truth on which emphasis is laid. Judgment is here: the gospel does its own work of separation by testing and revealing the affinities of the heart; yet the objective, atoning work of Christ is not ignored, nor is the resurrection and the final awards (John iii. 14, 15, v. 28, 29; 1 John i. 7, ii. 2). Paul connects the breaking down of the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile with the death of Christ (Gal. iii. 13, 14). In remarkable harmony with this conception are the words of Jesus when he was informed (John xii. 20 *seq.*) that Greeks who had come up to the passover desired to see him. It was a sign to him that his hour had come. The corn of wheat, in order not to "abide alone," but that it might bear fruit, must "fall into the ground and die."

In the forefront of the Gospel stands the announcement, "The Word became flesh." To support the groundless opinion that to the Evangelist the incarnation was a circumstance of no account, a Docetic junction of the Logos with the man Jesus, Baur erroneously makes the verses 9-14 refer to the preëxistent word. They refer to the incarnate Christ. The unprejudiced reader of the Gospel cannot fail to perceive that it is the historic Jesus, as he had lived, taught, consorted with his disciples, hung upon the cross, and risen from the tomb, on whom the attention of the Evangelist centres. "The prevalence, nay, the ubiquity, of the Messianic idea is the key to the motive of the narrative." This truth is illustrated, fully and ably, by Harnack.<sup>1</sup>

"As strongly," says Loofs, "as the deity of Christ is emphasized in the Gospel of John, as indubitably as Christ appears as a preëxistent subject (i. 14, viii. 58, xvii. 5), even so without reserve is Christ called a man (viii. 40, x. 33, xi. 47, 50). The narrative tells of his becoming tired and thirsting (iv. 61), of his weeping (xi. 35), of his being troubled in spirit (xii. 37), of his brothers (vii. 3), of his solicitude for his

<sup>1</sup> See the references above.

mother (xix. 16 *seq.*); yea, the Evangelist even lets him speak of his God and our God (xx. 17). From all Docetism is the Gospel as far as possible removed (cf. 1 John iv. 3). Even by the corpse the Evangelist in the most solemn manner authenticates the reality of the corporeal manifestation of the Lord (xix. 34)."<sup>1</sup> Loofs differentiates this view from the "caricature of the Johannean theology" by Holtzman, Pfleiderer, and others.

The plea that the type of doctrine in the fourth Gospel is an *a priori* construction on the basis of an abstract idea, borrowed from Alexandrian Jewish philosophy, has no foothold.

The argument on the side adverse to the genuineness of the Gospel, so far as its contents are concerned, must rest, if it has a resting-place anywhere, on the alleged inconsistency of the Johannean history of Jesus with the Synoptical narratives.

In the first place, the argument professes or implies a misjudgment respecting the Synoptic Gospels. They make no claim to be full biographies, and manifestly this character does not belong to them. They are made up of materials — partly of short sayings and parables — that would most easily lodge in the memory and be transmitted orally. As far as incidents in distinction from teaching are concerned, the current critical opinion accepts Mark as one of the principal sources. It was made use of by the first and the third Evangelists. It is obvious that this document is an invaluable sketch, but still a bare sketch, of the ground which it covers. It is an account at second-hand, not the writing of an apostle. Why should it be assumed that the second Gospel is to be the gauge for determining what credit shall be given to the fourth? That it was written first warrants no such inference. Prior to an investigation of the contents of the two sources, the fourth, to say the least, has a claim to equal confidence. Until the tradition of the Church has been disproved, the precedence belongs to its author as being an intimate follower of Jesus. Even if, as some maintain, a non-apostolic author who was a disciple of John supplemented and edited the apostle's writing, this author stands on a level with Mark. Not a few critics, when the origin and credibility of the fourth Gospel are under discussion, assume at the start for the Synoptics a precedence as authorities which is not justified by the canons of historical criticism.

Our second remark pertains to the relation of the Synoptics to

<sup>1</sup> *Realencykl. für prot. Theol. u. K.*, ed. 3, vol. iv. p. 29.

one another. The circumstance that Mark's Gospel is thought to have been one of the principal sources of the narrative matter in Matthew and in Luke, is fallaciously used to lessen comparatively the credit of these two authorities. Mark is cited by not a few as "the oldest authority," and the contents of his Gospel as "the earliest tradition," — only the *Logia* of Matthew being older. But there is nothing to oblige us to suppose that the narrative matter in Luke (for example) which Mark does not contain, is from any "later" source than Mark's narrative. The long passage which belongs to Luke exclusively, from ch. ix. 51 to ch. xviii. 14, embraces materials as trustworthy and as "early" (if we look at the sources whence Luke derived them) as the accounts given by Mark. We know that Mark does not record the greater part of the sayings of Jesus which were in the *Logia* of Matthew. There is no doubt that he omitted to gather up much more besides, which another inquirer, like Luke, might have ascertained from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." To reject historical accounts, therefore, or summarily to set them on a lower footing, merely because they are not comprised in an historical sketch as brief as that of Mark, is quite without warrant. Forthwith to assign additional circumstances, or variations of statement, in a parallel account of Matthew or of Luke, to a "second" or later evangelic tradition, is frequently, to say the least, to build upon imagination rather than logic. The amount of detail in an historical document is no sure criterion of its age.

In the third place, it is clear that, on the supposition of the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel, a certain subjective element is perceptible in its contents. Imagine that an aged disciple, who has long been in the habit of musing on the doings and the sayings of Jesus, undertakes to set down his reminiscences. Might he not be spontaneously led to tell the tale in his own language? Would it be strange if it were to be tinged with a hue imparted by his own meditations? Should it even occasion surprise if, here and there, in his recalling of what Christ said, there were to mingle, without advertisement to the reader, an explanatory comment? This suggestion does not imply that the Gospel resembles even remotely that species of biography (or autobiography) which goes under the name of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—wherein truth and poesy are of set purpose indistinguishably



blended. We are only required to assume that the acts and words of the Master are steeped, rather than mechanically held, in the memory of the devoted disciple. Moreover, the effect of condensation, the signs of which are sometimes apparent to the reader, must be taken into account. It need not occasion surprise if in New Testament narratives the ancient habit of using the *oratio recta* in reports of discourses and conversation should be exemplified.

The longer ministry of Jesus — extending to at least two years and a half, and probably to three years and a half — and his extended labors in Judæa are prominent features with the fourth Evangelist. But the Evangelist's representation of the life and ministry of Christ, although independent, is not in conflict with that of the Synoptics. The "country" of Jesus, it is to be observed, is still Galilee; for this is the right interpretation of John iv. 44. What the Galileans had seen him do in Jerusalem excited in Galilee, on his return, an interest in him not manifested before. Luke, in the long passage relating to the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (ix. 51 to xviii. 14), brings together matter of which a portion appears to have its place in the Judæan ministry. Independently of such particulars as the relation of Christ to the family of Mary and Martha, the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem (Luke xiii. 34 *seq.*; Matt. xxiii. 37 *seq.*) requires us to assume that he had frequently taught there. "How often," — these words in this lament must have included more than one short visit. The apostrophe plainly refers to the city, not to the Jewish people as a whole, to whom Baur, and not he alone, would arbitrarily apply it. In Luke, the preceding verse reads, "For it cannot be *that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*" This passage establishes on the authority of the Synoptics the fact of the longer Judæan ministry of Jesus, and so endorses the testimony of the fourth Gospel in this important particular. Luke (vi. 1) distinctly implies the intervention of at least one passover after the beginning and before the close of his public life. The deep and abiding impression made by Jesus is far less a mystery if we accept the chronology of the fourth Gospel than if we conceive his activity to have been confined to about a twelvemonth. The truth appears to be, that in the early oral narration of the life and teaching of Christ, perhaps for the reason that his labors in Jerusalem and the neighborhood were already more familiar to the Christians there, it was mainly the Galilean ministry that was described. The matter was

massed under the three general heads of his baptism and intercourse with John the Baptist, his work in Galilee, and the visit to Jerusalem at the passover, when he was crucified.

If the author of the fourth Gospel was not John, but a disciple of the apostle, or if he was some other immediate disciple of Jesus himself, no explanation can be given for the assumed erroneous chronology. The author, whoever he was, could easily have brought Jesus more frequently into conflict with the Pharisees, if that were his purpose, in other places than in Judæa. He might have interposed visits between the two passovers. Why should he set up a false chronological scheme which could only tend to arouse suspicion? The writer, whoever he was, was evidently acquainted with one, if not all, of the earlier Gospels.<sup>1</sup> Why did he not set his new portrait into the old frame? It is reasonable to think that it was because he was conversant with the facts, and consciously had such an acknowledged authority in the Church that he had no reason to fear contradiction.

The cleansing of the temple (John ii. 13 *seq.*) is connected in the Synoptics with the last passover, this being the only passover with which, in their scheme of chronology, it could be placed. The cleansing of the temple may well have occurred at the time assigned to it in the fourth Gospel. The booths of "the sons of Annas" had become a scandal among the Jews. His feeling respecting the temple, even in childhood, had been expressed in his question to his parents, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's House?" (Luke i. 49). The holy indignation prompting to the expulsion of the money-changers, this outbursting of prophetic energy, would naturally stifle any disposition to resist him. The impression just made on the people at large by the vehement rebukes of John the Baptist would have a like effect. Renan sees this to be probable.

Another subject of comparison between the fourth Gospel and the Synoptics relates to the day of the month when Christ was crucified. Was the Friday of the crucifixion the 14th, or the 15th, of the month Nisan? And was the Last Supper on the usual day of the passover meal, or on the evening before? Many scholars are of opinion that here is a discrepancy between the fourth Evangelist and the other three; that he, unlike them, makes the Last Supper to have occurred on the evening prior to the day on which the passover lamb was killed and eaten, and the crucifixion to have taken place on the next morning. Bleek, Neander, Weiss,

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, John iii. 24.

Westcott, Ellicott, and numerous others, admit the discrepancy, but argue in support of the accuracy of the fourth Gospel in this particular.<sup>1</sup> Some of the proofs are drawn from incidental remarks by the Synoptists themselves, and from the anterior probability, since the passover itself was a sacred festival. On the other hand, it has been contended that the author of the fourth Gospel purposely misdated these events in order to make the crucifixion synchronize with the slaying of the paschal lamb, his intent being to instil the idea that the passover is superseded by the offering of Christ, "the Lamb of God." If the discrepancy really exists, it furnishes no ground for ascribing the inaccuracy to the fourth Gospel. The motive assigned by the Tübingen school for the alleged falsification of the date is insufficient. In the first place, if the author of the Gospel had wanted to exhibit Christ as the antitype of the paschal lamb, he had no need to alter the received chronology. Christ is termed by Paul "our passover" (1 Cor. v. 7). In the second place, it is not certain even that the Evangelist intends to ascribe this character to Christ. The appellation "Lamb of God" may have been taken, not from Ex. xxix. 38 *seq.*, but from Isa. liii. 7. It is more probable that the passage quoted by the Evangelist, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (xix. 36), is cited from Ps. xxxiv. 20 than from the law relative to the paschal offering (Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12).<sup>2</sup> Had the Evangelist thought that the minute identification of Jesus with the paschal lamb was so very important that he would venture to set up a false date in the teeth of the received Gospels, he would have been likely to make the parallelism plain to the reader. He would not have been content with a very obscure suggestion. The author of the Gospel, whoever he was, was a devout believer in Jesus. How, then, *could* he himself have thought it a vital matter that Christ, as the antitype of the paschal lamb, should die on the 14th of Nisan, if he knew that it was not the fact?

The Quartodeciman observance in Asia Minor is a topic closely connected with the foregoing. That was on the 14th of Nisan. But what

<sup>1</sup> The fourth Gospel was thought to agree with the Synoptics by Dr. E. Robinson, Wieseler, Tholuck, Norton; Keil, *Komm. über das Evang. d. Matt.*, pp. 513-528; Luthardt, *Komm. über das Evang. Johann*; McLellan, *The New Testament*, etc., vol. i. pp. 473-494; and others. The current of critical opinion is in the opposite direction.

<sup>2</sup> See Hutton's thoughtful essay on John's Gospel (*Essays*, vol. i. p. 195); Weiss-Meyer, *Komm.* (John xix. 36).

did it commemorate? Many scholars have thought that it was the crucifixion of Jesus. If this be so, it supports that interpretation of the fourth Gospel which would make it set the crucifixion on the morning before the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, and at the same time it confirms the Evangelist's testimony on this point. But since the able essay of Schürer, his opinion, which agrees substantially with that defended earlier by Bleek and Gieseler, has gained favor, that the Quartodeciman Supper on the evening of the 14th of Nisan was at the outset the Jewish passover, kept at the usual time, but transformed into a Christian festival. John found the festival in being when he came to Asia Minor, and may well have left it to stand, "whether he regarded the 13th or the 14th as the day of the Last Supper."<sup>1</sup> It is certain that when the controversy about the festival was rife, the defenders of the Quartodeciman practice in Asia found nothing in the fourth Gospel to clash with their views, and appealed in behalf of their rite to the authority of the apostle John. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, toward the end of the second century, pointed back to his example, designating him as the apostle "who leaned on the bosom of the Saviour." It appears quite astonishing that a Gospel should have been composed in a spirit of antagonism to the tenet of the Quartodecimans, but have treated the matter so obscurely that their leaders failed to discover in it anything opposed to their custom. It is not agreed what precise position on the paschal controversy was taken by Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, the successor, and it may be the next successor, of Papias, in the second century. But this is known, that he recognized the fourth Gospel, and made his appeal to it. We may dismiss the Quartodeciman discussion, since it affords, even in the view of some of the ablest opponents of the Johannean authorship of the fourth Gospel, of whom Schürer is one, no support for their opinion on this subject.

The character and mission of John the Baptist, what he did and said, and his attitude in relation to Christ and the gospel, were evidently of very deep interest to the author of the fourth Gospel. In considering the statements of the Evangelist on this subject, we must bear in mind that, as John the Baptist stood at a point of transition from one stage of development to a higher, so the apostle John, having shared in this experience, had advanced beyond its earlier stage, and looked back upon it with the clear perception of its nature which was gained from his advanced point of view. Neander, with his usual historical sagacity, has commented on the effect of this new enlightenment.

"Truths not seen clearly by John the Baptist stood clearly before the mind of the Evangelists. But this very fact may have caused the

<sup>1</sup> Schürer, *Zeitschr. für hist. Theol.*, 1870, pp. 182 seq.

obscurity which we find in their accounts of the Baptist. . . . If, therefore, we find on close inquiry that the historical statements are somewhat obscured by subjective influences, our estimate of their verity need be in no wise affected thereby."<sup>1</sup>

It requires no argument to confirm the statement of the Gospels that Jesus was brought into a close relation to John the Baptist. Had he not been, considering the widespread excitement which was kindled by the preacher in the wilderness, whose powerful influence is attested by Josephus, there would be cause for wonder. Nazareth was a village, but it was not an obscure village. From the hills around it, "which were everywhere within the limits of the village boys' playground," could be seen the valley of the Jordan as well as the waters of the Mediterranean. Caravans from the fords of the river could be watched as they wound around the base of the plain on which the village stood.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing can be plainer than that the Evangelist meant his readers to understand that Jesus was baptized by John (John i. 32-34), although even this has been questioned. When Matthew's relation (iii. 13-17) is compared with the parallel synoptical accounts, the reasonable conclusion is that the vision of the Baptist gave him the full assurance that Jesus was in truth the Messiah. This does not exclude the supposition that a simultaneous vision confirmed Jesus himself in the consciousness of his Messianic mission. The subsequent exclamation ascribed to John the Baptist (vs. 29), when he saw Jesus approaching, "Behold the Lamb of God," etc., may have been an outburst of devout enthusiasm which sprung from a prescience, growing out of his own experience, that a mortal struggle with the corrupt part of the people awaited the heaven-sent Messiah.<sup>3</sup>

Besides this matter of the circumstances attending the baptism of Jesus, the entire narrative in the fourth Gospel of his relations to the Forerunner furnishes to some critics a reason for impeaching its credibility.<sup>4</sup> In the Synoptics the imprisonment of John

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *Leben Jesu*, pp. 69 seq.; American translation, p. 46 seq.

<sup>2</sup> See Professor George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 432, 433.

<sup>3</sup> See Neander, *Leben Jesu*, pp. 260, 261.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, on the passage quoted and the context, Réville says, "C'était encore une manière de faire ressortir la supériorité de Jésus." *Jésus de Nazareth*, vol. ii. p. 20, n.



follows immediately upon the account of the temptation of Jesus. When he heard of this imprisonment, "Jesus withdrew into Galilee." Then followed the call to Peter, to his brother Andrew, to John and to James, to attach themselves to him as his followers. In John there intervenes an account of the connection of the first three with John the Baptist, how he pointed out Jesus to John and Andrew, who spent the day with him, and how, the next day, Andrew brought to Jesus his brother Simon Peter. Then follows the journey to Capernaum and the brief stay there prior to the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem to attend the passover. Learning that the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing more disciples than John, he left Judæa again for Galilee. The Evangelist takes pains to correct the impression as to the chronology, which the Synoptics would make, by saying explicitly that at this time "John was not yet cast into prison" (iii. 24). The question is whether in all this we have truth or invention. The negative criticism does not hesitate to affirm that we have in all this a falsification of history. It is a pretty hard accusation; but let us look at the probabilities in the case. The order of occurrences in the first and third Gospels, the critics assure us, follows that in Mark. In his narrative we are informed that Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw the fishermen, Peter and Andrew, casting their nets, and James and John. At his bidding they immediately quit their nets and their boats and join him (Mark i. 20). He had only to say to the first pair, "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men," "And straightway they left their nets and followed him." He had only to utter a word of summons to the second pair, "and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him." They instantly abandon their occupations, and become his permanent companions. In the fourth Gospel circumstances are related which explain the seemingly abrupt call and the instantaneous compliance with it. It was not the beginning of their acquaintance with Jesus. Their connection with him before was loose and not permanent. They had met him in the neighborhood of the Jordan, had gone with him into Judæa, and after John was delivered up had journeyed with him back to Galilee. It need occasion no surprise that the brief sketch of Mark should begin with the call of Peter to permanent discipleship. That the Baptist should have looked to see the expected kingdom of the Messiah set up in a visible, impressive form, is nothing more

than what the chosen disciples of Jesus, when they had long been under his personal tutelage, had not surrendered (Acts i. 6). Hence, after waiting in vain for a signal manifestation of Messianic power and dignity on the part of Jesus, the preacher in the wilderness, immured in a prisoner's cell, now that his own work had apparently ended, grew impatient and perhaps asked himself whether, after all, Jesus might not be a second forerunner of the Messiah, and sent him a messenger in order to set his mind at rest (Matt. xi. 3). If the account of the acquaintance of Jesus with the Baptist which is presented in the fourth Gospel is false, who invented it? The ablest supporters of the negative criticism hold at present that either the apostle John himself, or one of his immediate disciples, or, possibly, another disciple of Jesus himself, furnished materials for the Gospel narrative. Whichever it was, shall an invention of this sort be credited to him? We have a life-like picture of what occurred. John sees Jesus coming to him and points him out to those about him. The next day, when John, in the hearing of two of his disciples, again pointed him out, these follow him. Jesus turns and sees them coming after him. Then the further details are given. This is either a true or a mendacious narrative. The notion that the three consecutive days in this passage are an artificial triad, and one of a number of like fictions in the Gospel, is a fancy of certain critics.<sup>1</sup> This rooted suspicion is dealt with scornfully even by one of the most radical of the writers on the Introduction to the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

What is recorded of the relation of the Baptist to Jesus after his baptism is, in its main particulars, not discordant with the probabilities in the case. The Kingdom of God was not yet set up. It was still in the future. Until the Messiah should make it a tangible reality, the work of the Forerunner in preparing for it was to go on. Accordingly, John did not suspend his preparatory work. He contented himself with introducing two or three of his most sympathetic disciples to him who was "to increase" — whose

<sup>1</sup> See Holtzmann, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> Jülicher, *Einl. in. d. N. T.*, p. 238, who says: "Eine mit raffinirter Kunst *ausgedachte* Gliederung, einen im Grossen wie in Kleinigkeiten (z. B. i. 1, 2, 3) durchgeführten Schematismus von Dreitheiten, hat man in Joh. hineingeheimnisst. Die meisten dieser Dreitheiten dürfte der Verfasser selber nicht bemerkt haben, und die allerverschiedensten Dispositionen lassen sich mit gleichen Rechte als von ihm beabsichtigt vertreten," etc.

influence was to grow—while he himself was “to decrease.” It is natural that some of his disciples were more susceptible than others, and that after the prophet was taken away the development of his disciples varied. Before this time, some of them were nettled at the increasing number of the disciples of Jesus (John iii. 26 *seq.*). Later (Acts xix. 1 *seq.*) we hear of some in whom “there was a mixture of impressions left by John the Baptist with scattered accounts received of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

The principal thing relied upon to disprove the genuineness of the fourth Gospel is the account which is given there of the way in which Jesus himself is known as the Messiah and came to be recognized as such by his disciples. The disclosure was much later, it is said, than the fourth Evangelist makes it to be, and the perception of this truth by the followers of Jesus was gradual. Hence, for one thing, the entire account in the Gospel of the personal meeting of disciples of John with Jesus is discredited. In support of this principal count in the indictment of the Evangelist, the appeal is made to the passage in Mark (viii. 27–30), which relates the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi. We read that in answer to the question of Jesus, “Who say ye that I am?” Peter avows his faith in him as the Messiah, a declaration for which he is commended by Christ. This incident is made the basis of the inference that up to this time the apostles had not looked on him as the Messiah, and had not been taught by Jesus so to regard him. This criticism must assume that the apostles had abandoned their occupations, had left house and home, to follow Jesus, had listened to his teachings in public and in private, and yet had not recognized him as the head of the promised kingdom. This opinion, in itself improbable, is disproved even by what Mark himself relates of the period before the occurrence of the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi. The “mightier” one, of whom the Baptist spoke (Mark i. 7, 8), whose shoes he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose, who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, must have been understood to be the Messiah. In Mark (i. 11) we read of the voice from heaven, “Thou art my beloved Son.” That he was thus at his baptism styled the Messiah could

<sup>1</sup> See Neander, *Planting and Training of the Church* (Robinson's ed.), p. 210. The observations of Neander are one more illustration of his insight as an historical critic. They suggest a sufficient answer to Wendt's inferences from Acts xix. 1 *seq.*, in *Das Johannisevangelium*, p. 14.

not have been a secret hidden from the apostles, including Peter. In Mark we have the account of the temptation, followed at once by the announcement by Jesus (i. 15) that the "time is fulfilled," — the time which was to precede "the Kingdom of God." They did not ask, or need to ask, who was to be the King. Had they not understood that the expected King was he who uttered words like these, they would have inquired where and when they should look for him. He called the disciples to make them "fishers of men" (Mark i. 16). The demoniacs in the hearing of the disciples hailed him as the Messiah (*e.g.* Mark i. 24), for the demons, Mark tells us (vs. 34), "knew him." They gave him the Messianic title, "Son of God" (Mark iii. 11). In Mark ii. 10, Jesus characterizes himself as the "Son of man" who hath power on earth to forgive sins.<sup>1</sup> He is the "bridegroom" (ii. 19). What else could it signify to those who were familiar with the prophecy of Daniel, but the Messiah? "He is the Lord of the Sabbath" (ii. 10, 27). At Jericho, blind Bartimeus saluted him with the Messianic designation, the "Son of David" (Mark x. 47 *seq.*). The demand of the Pharisees for a sign from heaven (Mark viii. 11) implies a well-understood claim on his part to be the predicted Messiah. The critics generally unite in holding that the Evangelist Matthew had in his hands Mark as well as the apostle Matthew's *Logia* (or Discourses) of Jesus. Prior to the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi, according to Matthew, the disciples had explicitly addressed him as the Messiah (Matt. xiv. 33).<sup>2</sup> The people, into whose minds the Pharisees had infused doubts, exclaimed on seeing a miracle of healing, "Is this the Son of David?" (Matt. xii. 23, and xii. 1 *seq.*). Could the disciples, when they listened to the Sermon on the Mount, in which there was an avowed exercise of supreme legislative authority, a proclamation of the laws of the new kingdom, a contrast asserted to exist between him who spoke and the prophets, fail to discern that it was no other than

<sup>1</sup> The title "Son of man" in the New Testament was obviously derived from the designation of the Messiah in the book of Daniel. If it was not used by the people exclusively as a Messianic title, it does not follow that this was not its meaning when used by Jesus himself. With him, it was a designation, even if it were a "veiled designation," of his Messiahship. See the discussion of Dr. Stevens, *The Theology of the New Testament*, ch. iv.

<sup>2</sup> For the many declarations of Jesus in Matthew from the *Logia* (before the record in ch. xvi. 13 *seq.*), which taught the people as well as the disciples that he was the Messiah, see Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 260, n.

the Messiah to whom they were listening? Peter's glowing expression of faith at Cæsarea Philippi was a spontaneous utterance. It was not elicited as a response to any assertion of Jesus that he was the Messiah. The question was simply, "Who say ye that I am?" The inquiry was occasioned by the falling away of the populace, who had wanted to make Jesus a king, but whose hopes were disappointed by his failure to encourage them in their scheme. Their enthusiasm was chilled. Was it possible that similar misgivings were rising, too, in the minds of the disciples from the disappointment of *their* hopes? The question put by Jesus was a test. It proved that while the people had fallen away from this faith, the disciples stood firm. "A renewed spiritual faith in the Messiah after all worldly Messianic hopes had been crushed" shone out.<sup>2</sup> The fourth Gospel (John vi. 66 *seq.*) records a like or the same conversation, when Jesus said, "Would ye also go away?" The Galilean following had actually melted away.

When the Gospels are fairly studied they yield a consistent and in itself probable view of the course pursued by Jesus in the disclosure of his Messianic calling. In the first place, there is not a hint in the records of any denial of it on his part, or of a syllable from his lips that might tend to mislead in this particular those who heard him. In the second place, his Messianic office is kept in the background. There is an habitual endeavor to prevent the exalted character of his mission from being noised abroad. When he wrought miracles, we find connected with them an injunction imposing silence on one and another recipient of the blessing imparted. At Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 30; Matt. xvi. 20) he only followed his custom when he charged the disciples to "tell no man that he was the Christ." So after the transfiguration they were to "tell the vision to no man." His motive was to forestall a popular demonstration arising out of mistaken, worldly anticipations on the part of the multitude. There was an imminent danger to guard against. Evidently his aim was to instil that belief without raising a commotion. He wanted the belief in him as the Messiah to take root. He wanted it to become strong enough to meet the trials it would have to encounter, and become more and more stable and confident, all the while keeping

<sup>1</sup> See Weiss-Meyer, *Komm. in Johann., ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, E. Tr., B. VI., cvi. In this chapter, Weiss's interpretation of Mark vii. 27-30 is fully sustained.



pace with the developing perception of the spiritual idea of the Messiah and of his work. It was neither requisite nor was it meet to leave a few disciples of John the Baptist, men who were waiting for the Kingdom, in ignorance of the true intent and import of his mission. It was natural that what they saw at Cana should strengthen their new-born faith. "His disciples believed on him" (John ii. 11) ; that is, they were inspired afresh with the conviction of his Messiahship, instilled into them in their first interviews with him. The early part of the ministry of Jesus, his Judaic teaching in that period, and the first passover do not belong in the plan of the Synoptics. But the reference of what was said by him in John ii. 19 and iii. 14 of the temple, and of the serpent lifted up, to his death, was an afterthought of the disciples. If the allusion in these places was to his Messianic work and to his death, the meaning was hidden from them.<sup>1</sup> The story of his subsequent intercourse with them indicates that there was progress in the discipline of their faith, until it became ineradicable, despite the deepening shadows which preceded and led up to the cross.

We have next to consider the discourses of Christ as given in the fourth Gospel, in themselves and in comparison with the reports of his teaching in the Synoptics. Unquestionably it is the distinctive character of this part of the Johannean record, which, more than anything else, has been the occasion of doubt as to the apostolic authorship. It is an objection to be looked fairly in the face. It is only just to remember that the ordinary effect of oral repetition of a narrative is to hold fast its salient points, to sift out, and perhaps to modify, minor details, and to retain whatever home-bred vigor may belong to the phraseology. These traits are manifest in the first three Gospels. Again, if the fourth Gospel is made up of personal recollections of the author, it is not strange that it should reflect in a measure his individuality. The discourses do not differ materially in style from the other parts of the Gospel and from the first Epistle. No doubt it must be assumed, and it ought not to be called in question, that the teaching of Jesus had been assimilated, and that what we have is a reproduction mainly in the author's own language. More is

<sup>1</sup> On these passages, judicious remarks may be read in the valuable work of Dr. Forrest, *The Christ of History and of Experience*, pp. 99, 100.

meant than the turning of Aramaic into Greek. Yet the process is a totally different thing from fabrication, and is perfectly consistent with substantially faithful recollection. Let a sympathetic pupil sit at the feet of an inspiring teacher. Suppose the pupil long after to set out to convey to others, not only in another language, but perhaps in a more or less condensed form, what he had heard. In places it may take the form of a digest. It will be natural to clothe it partly, and sometimes altogether, in his own phraseology, and even to blend with it, more or less, an expository element to assist the comprehension of the listener. Yet after all it is the teacher who moulds the pupil and speaks through him. The essential conceptions of the teacher have become the staple of his habitual reflections. The ideas and the spirit of the instructor may be transmitted to other minds more effectually than could be done otherwise — unless, possibly, a *verbatim* report of his discourses were to be given. It is really a sign of essential faithfulness in giving the gist of the discourses if the author has so appropriated the Master's teaching that here and there he glides into an expansion of it, without notice to the reader. Possibly an instance is John iii. 11-21. If so, it is not easy to draw the line between the words of Jesus and the thought of the Evangelist. Incidentally we meet with undesigned tokens of the correctness of the Evangelist's memory. One striking instance is the words, "Arise, let us go hence" (John xiv. 31). These are not explained in the text, but imply a simultaneous change of place, — a rising from the table, followed either by a continued tarrying in the room or a going forth at once toward the garden. To conceive of them as laid into a fictitious narrative, although nothing is subjoined to explain what was the action that followed them, is absurd.<sup>1</sup>

Who can doubt that Jesus said much more, and, especially in converse with his disciples alone, spoke at times in a more continuous strain than the Synoptists relate? They preserve, for example, but a few sentences uttered by Christ at the Last Supper. Yet he sat with the disciples a large part of the night. Here, again, the peculiarity to be expected in an oral tradition, in contrast with the more full and connected relation of one who draws from a

<sup>1</sup> If it be supposed that there is a dislocation of the chapters, the words quoted stood in the original record of the discourses. On the question of dislocations, see above, p. 268, and Appendix, Note 15.

store of personal recollections, is observable. But in Christ's manner of teaching, there are not wanting in the Synoptic Gospels close resemblances to the method of instruction as it appears in the discourses in John. Much is said of the use of symbols in the Johannean record of the teaching, as in the connecting of physical blindness with spiritual (ix. 39-41). But how does this differ from such a saying as, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 22)? It is said that frequently in John figurative expressions are not understood by his disciples. But in the Synoptics we read such statements as, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt. xvi. 11) — words which the disciples failed to comprehend; and "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke xxii. 36), which the disciples misunderstood, and which Jesus did not stop to interpret to them. Such an illustration as that of the good shepherd (ch. x.) indicates the same mental habit as that which dictated the parables found in the first three Gospels. The close examination of the two authorities, John and the Synoptics, brings to light numerous parallelisms in the mode in which the religious thoughts of Christ are expressed — resemblances such as might not catch the attention of a cursory reader.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this topic, see Luthardt, *Der Johann. Ursprung*, etc., pp. 185 seq.; or Godet, *Comm.*, etc., pp. 189 seq.; also Westcott, *Comm. on St. John's Gospel* (Am. ed.), pp. lxxxii. seq. Among the passages are: John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple," etc. (Matt. xxvi. 61, xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58, xv. 29); John iv. 44, "A prophet hath no honor," etc. (Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 24); John v. 8, "Rise, take up thy bed," etc. (Matt. ix. 5 seq.; Mark ii. 9; Luke v. 24); John vi. 20 (Matt. xiv. 27; Mark vi. 50), John vi. 35 (Matt. v. 6; Luke vi. 21); John vi. 46 (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 21 seq.); John xii. 7 (Matt. xxvi. 12; Mark xiv. 8); John xii. 8 (Matt. xxvi. 11; Mark xiv. 7); John xii. 25, "He that loveth his life," etc. (Matt. x. 39, xiv. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24); John xii. 27, "Now is my soul troubled" (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 34 seq.); John xiii. 3, "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 21 seq.); John xiii. 16 (Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40); John xiii. 20 (Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16); John xiii. 21 (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18); John xiii. 38 (Matt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34); John xiv. 18 (Matt. xxviii. 20); John xv. 20 (Matt. x. 25); John xv. 21 (Matt. x. 22); John xvi. 32 (Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27); John xvii. 2 (Matt. xxviii. 18); John xviii. 11 (Matt. xxvi. 39, 52; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42); John xviii. 20 (Matt. xxvi. 55); John xviii. 33 (Matt. xxvii. 11); John xx. 23 (Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18). The terms "life" and "eternal life" are found in Matthew, and are even interchanged with "kingdom of heaven." Compare Matt. xviii. 3 with ver. 8; xix. 17 with ver. 23; xxv. 34

The relation of the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptics and in John respectively has been compared to the relation of the teaching of Socrates in Xenophon to the representation of it in Plato. This analogy, if not carried too far, is just. That Socrates had another vein in his conversations than is represented in the *Memorabilia* is indicated occasionally in Xenophon's work. We have to explain how it happened that he fascinated Plato as well as Xenophon. More distinctly in the Synoptics appears the same vein of teaching which is prominent in the fourth Gospel. If the significance and importance of personal union and fellowship with Jesus stand out more conspicuously in this Gospel, still the difference is one of degree. The spirit of the Synoptical teaching is not out of harmony with the words to which it gives a central place: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," etc. (Matt. v. 28 *seq.*). The following words might naturally fall from the same lips, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John xiv. 27).

As regards theology, we meet in the Synoptics traces of essentially the same teaching which meets us in the fourth Gospel. The memorable passage in Matt. xi. 27, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," is in substance and style identical with what is familiar in John. It is a specimen of that sort of teaching respecting himself and his relation to God which we should expect Christ to impart to his followers. Is it probable that he would have left them quite in the dark on those questions respecting which they must have yearned for light, and which are leading topics in the fourth Gospel? The institution of the Lord's Supper as it is recorded in the Synoptics strongly suggests that teaching respecting his person and the spiritual reception of himself—such teaching as we find in John vi.—had

with ver. 46; ix. 45 with ver. 47. These resemblances to the Synoptics are wholly inartificial. Holtzmann's attempt to show that words and phrases are culled from the Synoptists by the author of the fourth Gospel, and put together in a kind of mosaic, is a failure. The inference finds no warrant in the data brought forward to sustain it. The fourth Gospel is as far as possible from being a composite of scraps of phraseology picked up from different sources. It has a homogeneous character, a continuity, a life, which it never could have had if it had been composed in the mechanical way supposed.

been previously given to the disciples. Else how could his words at the Last Supper have been intelligible to them? The conception of his person in the Synoptical Gospels is at bottom the same as in the fourth. In them he stands forth as the supreme law-giver, as we see in the Sermon on the Mount. He is distinguished from the prophets and exalted above them. He is at last to judge the world of mankind. The particular point that is found in John, in distinction from the other Gospels, is the explicit doctrine of his preëxistence. It stands in a different connection from the doctrine as it appears in the Epistle to the Hebrews. As to the opinion that the Evangelist "has simply put into the mouth of Jesus ideas learned from Paul," it is an unproved and unfounded conclusion. "Such a method on the part of the author of the fourth Gospel would argue an indifference to historic truth which is by no means borne out by the character of the Gospel as a whole."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Jews, in the later period of their history prior to the time of Jesus, many pseudonymous works were composed. This took place chiefly among the Alexandrians, but was not confined to them.

Conscious that the age of inspiration had gone by, authors undertook to set forth, under the name of Enoch, Solomon, or some other worthy, the lessons which they thought suited to the times. They aspired to speak in the spirit of the prophet or sage whose name they assumed. In this literary device there was often no set purpose to deceive. The practice early passed, however, into a more culpable sort of forgery. It made its way into certain Christian circles where Judaic and Judaizing influences prevailed. The distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine, which may be traced to the Alexandrian philosophy, served as a partial excuse for it. Writings were fabricated like the Sibylline Oracles and the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies. But pious frauds of this nature, as every one feels, do violence to the sense of truth which Christianity demands and fosters. The Gospel brought in a purer standard. In the ancient Church, as now, books of this sort were earnestly condemned by enlightened Christians. Tertullian informs us that the presbyter who was convicted of writing, in the name of Paul, the *Acta Pauli et Theclæ*, confessed his offence, and was deposed from office. This incident shows the natural feeling of Christians generally in respect to this kind of benevolent imposture. The reader can judge

<sup>1</sup> McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, p. 489. Dr. McGiffert proceeds to refute the opinion that "the Evangelist put into Jesus' mouth extended discourses which had no basis whatever in his actual words."



for himself what is the moral tone of the Johannean Gospel and Epistle. Did the author, in the point of sound ethical feeling, stand on the plane of the manufacturers of spurious books? Would such a man construct, under the mask of an apostle, a fictitious history of the Lord? Such a work, let it be noticed, is of a character utterly diverse from a purely homiletic writing.

Both in ancient and modern times doubts have been entertained of the genuineness of the second Epistle of Peter. But if we can imagine a well-meaning Christian, with a conscience imperfectly trained, undertaking to compose a homily under the assumed name of an apostle, that is something utterly different from an attempt to build upon the ground, sacred as it must have been felt to be, that was already covered by the authentic Gospels. The irreverence of such a procedure eclipses any example furnished by the Gospels known to be apocryphal, which mainly confine themselves to the infancy of Jesus and to the Virgin Mary. Baur, defending his position, actually likens the author of this Gospel to the apostle Paul. Paul, he reminds us, was not one of the twelve. Why, he inquired, should there not be still another apostle? Think of the apostle Paul sitting down to compose a religious romance in the form of a history of the Lord Jesus Christ! And yet the author of the fourth Gospel, in point of moral and spiritual worth, is put by Baur on a level with the apostle Paul.

One of the most radical opponents of the Johannine authorship, at the same time that he sets its date not later than about 100, frankly says that its writer "was perhaps the greatest Christian thinker in the Christendom of that time."<sup>1</sup> In the Christian literature of the second century, no book approaches in power the fourth Gospel. Everything is of an inferior quality.

When we take up the writings of the sub-apostolic age, we are conscious of an abrupt descent from the plane of the apostolic writings. The apostolic Fathers as a rule exhibit a languor which communicates itself to the reader. The epistle of Polycarp, although not wanting in good sense and good feeling, is not an exception. The epistle of Clement of Rome will not bear comparison with the New Testament writers. Unless with a view to scholarly investigation, who cares to linger over the allegories of Hermas? The anonymous epistle to Diognetus, the date of which is somewhere about the end of the second century, stands alone in that era as a really spirited composition. It

<sup>1</sup> Jülicher, *Introd. in d. N. T.*, p. 259.

is a discourse or appeal addressed to an individual; but despite its rhetorical vigor, it cannot be compared for a moment in depth and power with the fourth Gospel. The writings of that day, those of Justin included, are comparatively faint echoes of the inspired works of the preceding age.

How can a book of the transcendent power of the fourth Gospel be referred to a period of decadence? It has commanded the reverent sympathy of saints and scholars. It has touched the hearts of a multitude who with Martin Luther have felt it to be the chief Gospel, — the “*Hauptevangelium*.” It has held its throne, age after age, in the households of the Christian nations, in every stage of culture and civilization. Such a product, springing up, like a flower of perennial beauty, in the barren waste of post-apostolic authorship, would be a veritable anachronism.

The two ablest of the later critics<sup>1</sup> who withhold their assent to the tradition which certifies the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel, are nevertheless emphatic in declaring, what indeed is very plain, that the Gospel stands in a palpably close relation to the apostle John. Weizsäcker doubts not that it was written “under the colors — unter dem Fahne — of the apostle,” in the shadow of his repute and authority. The apostle, it is further said, as is indicated in ch. xxi. 23, lived to an advanced age, and it was only a short time after he died that the Gospel was written and given out. The author of the Gospel and the school to which he belonged might even make a claim to the name of the apostle, because he had belonged to their church and had been the head of it. Moreover, it is admitted that the doctrine of the Logos may have sprung up under his eyes and been approved by him, or at least not been opposed. The apostle was in truth the link of transition from the old faith to its form in the Gospel. Moreover, it is said that the characteristic features of personal devotion to Christ which pervade the Gospel are not the offspring of the Logos doctrine, but the outcome of a living experience. They could only emanate from the spirit of a disciple of Jesus. Nothing short of the testimony of an immediate apostle, his intuition of Christ, and the simplicity of his conception of faith can explain the taking up by one later of the Logos idea. What is depicted in the two parts

<sup>1</sup> Weizsäcker and Harnack.

of the Gospel, the first of which is the victorious might of Jesus over his enemies, and the second, his own attractive irresistible power, by which he drew his disciples to himself, constitutes the portraiture of a character which can proceed from no other than the soul of a disciple of Jesus himself, formed by it and filled with it. The school of discipleship in the bosom of which the Gospel appeared testifies to the powerful influence of the apostle John. To his influence both tendencies, finding their expression in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel, are due. So writes Weizsäcker.<sup>1</sup> Who the Evangelist was he does not undertake to say.

Harnack doubts not that John, the son of Zebedee, in some way "stands behind the fourth Gospel." To the apostle, to what he did and said, there are such references as to show conclusively that to him the Evangelist stood in a special relation. He wrote with aid from traditions obtained from the apostle John, who, as the "disciple whom Jesus loved," stood, in the esteem of the Evangelist, in the foreground of the company of disciples. Such, we are told, was the relation of "John the Presbyter" to the apostle. To the presbyter, and not to the apostle, Harnack, although not without frankly expressed misgivings, is inclined to attribute the composition of the Gospel. The function of "Apostle and Chief Bishop" of Asia he would transfer to John the Presbyter.<sup>2</sup>

So far as lapse of time is presupposed by the developed type of doctrine which appears in the Gospel, this condition is present in the case of the aged apostle himself, as in the case of either a group of his supposed disciples, or of any individual among them, to whom our critics think themselves obliged to ascribe its composition. In this interval of thirty years, why may it not be in the loved disciple's own soul that the conception of Christ ripened into that deeper spiritual apprehension of his person and teaching which shines forth in the Gospel? It would be only the fulfilment of the prediction and promise attributed by its author to Christ. After he had parted from them, his teaching was to be revealed to

<sup>1</sup> See his *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, 2d ed., pp. 515, 517, 518, 519, 520, 523, 526, 530, 532, 534, 537, 538. These ideas are brought forward and developed at greater length, but with some differences, in Weizsäcker's first principal work, *Untersuchungen über d. Evangelische Geschichte*, Th. 2. See second edition of this work (1891).

<sup>2</sup> *Die Chronologie d. Altkristl. Lit.*, vol. i. pp. 677, 679.

his disciples through the Spirit, its depth of meaning opened to their perception. "He shall guide you into all truth."<sup>1</sup> Against the hypothesis that the authorship was non-apostolic stands the affirmation of the author that from the numerous signs wrought by Jesus, he had made a selection, and that his motive was that those for whom the Gospel was written might believe. Thus they would have the blessing, just before referred to, of such as not having seen, have yet believed. Herewith belongs the positive testimony of the disciples of the apostle, at the end of the Gospel, that he himself wrote it. Had its author not been the apostle himself, it is unaccountable that his disciples, who survived him, should not have been aware of the fact, or should have deemed it unimportant, or not have let it be known. The hypothesis sketched above labors under another difficulty. One principal reason which is assigned for rejecting the apostolic authorship is features of the narrative which are supposed by critics on that side of the question to clash with the Synoptics or to be on some other ground incredible. An example is the record of the early acquaintance of John with Jesus through the mediation of John the Baptist. But how can we ascribe these passages to disciples of the apostle John? If they did not get these details from him, did they make them up? Since the isolated objection of the "Alogi," in the shape in which it was made, confirms the otherwise unbroken tradition, that tradition is virtually universal. It is incredible that Irenæus mistook the meaning and was ignorant of the belief of Polycarp and of other older contemporaries on a matter so profound and so interesting to him and to them.

The decision relative to the authorship of the fourth Gospel lies between two hypotheses. The one recognizes the apostle John himself as its author. The other attributes the Gospel to a disciple of the apostle, by whom matter resting directly or indirectly on his authority was combined with materials derived from other sources. To the present writer, the hypothesis which identifies the Evangelist with the apostle appears entitled to acceptance, as exposed to less weighty objections, besides being supported by the concurrent testimonies of Christian antiquity.

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 14, xiv. 26, xv. 26. Cf. Loofs, *l. c.*, p. 35.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE APOSTLES' TESTIMONY AS PRESENTED BY THE EVANGELISTS

IN the last two chapters evidence has been brought forward to prove that the Gospels were written by apostles and companions of apostles ; in particular, that the fourth Gospel is rightly attributed to John ; that the first Gospel, at least in its original form, and as to the main portion of its contents, had Matthew for its author, and that it existed in the Greek, and in its present compass, while the generation of the first disciples of Jesus, by whom it was acknowledged, was still in being ; that the second and third Gospels were composed by contemporaries who brought together the information which they had sought and obtained from apostles, and from others who were immediately cognizant of the facts. The Gospels thus meet one test of trustworthy historical evidence, — that it shall come from witnesses or well-informed contemporaries. They present the information which the apostles gave to their converts respecting the words and actions of Jesus. We have to specify reasons why this testimony is entitled to credit. Let it be understood that in this place we have nothing to do with the theological doctrine of inspiration, or with the nature and limits of divine help afforded to the historical writers of the New Testament in the composition of their books. That subject is irrelevant to the present discussion. What we have to establish is the essential credibility of the Evangelists ; in other words, to show that the narrative which they give of the life of Jesus may be relied on as safely as we rely on the biographical accounts of other eminent personages in the past which are known to have been composed by honest and, in other respects, competent narrators.

1. The fact of the selection of the apostles, and the view deliberately taken both by Jesus and by themselves of their function, are a strong argument for their credibility.

In inquiring whether the Gospel history is true or not, it is, first of all, important to ascertain what view Jesus took of the life he



was leading among men, and also to observe in what light his career was regarded by his followers. Had his teaching, and the events occurring in connection with his life, such a significance in his own eyes, that he meant them to be the subject of testimony? Did he design that they should be remembered, and be faithfully narrated to those beyond the circle of immediate observers? In other words, had he, and his followers with him, an "historical feeling" as regards the momentous occurrences, as they proved to be, belonging to his career? This question is conclusively answered by the fact of a deliberate selection by him of a body of persons to be with him, who were deputed to relate what they saw and heard, and who distinctly understood this to be an essential part of their business. They were called "the Twelve"; and so current was this appellation at an early day, that Paul thus designates them even in referring to the time when Judas had fallen out of their number (1 Cor. xv. 5). The idea which they had of their office was explicitly pointed out by Peter when he stated the qualifications of the one who should be chosen in place of Judas (Acts i. 21-25). It may be remarked, before quoting the passage, that, even if there were any just ground for suspecting the accuracy of Luke in general, it could have no application in this place. For instance, there is no room for the bias of a Pauline disciple, since the transaction is one in which it is Peter who appears as the leader; and the thing proposed is the completion of the number of "the Twelve." The passage reads as follows, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us"—that is, travelled about with us—"all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,"—that is, was in constant intercourse with us,— "beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." The resurrection is particularly mentioned as the fact most prominent in the apostle's testimony. Here is a deliberate consciousness on the part of Peter, that he and his fellow-apostles were clothed with the responsibility of witnesses, and that, to be of their number, one must have the necessary qualification of a credible witness,—a personal knowledge of that about which he is to testify. "We are witnesses," said Peter, on a subsequent occasion, "of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem" (Acts x. 39).<sup>1</sup> Their

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke xxiv. 47-49; Acts i. 8.

commission was to "teach all nations," and to teach them the commandments of Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 20). His teaching was to be brought to their remembrance (John xiv. 26). They were forewarned that they would be arraigned before magistrates, to give reasons for their adherence to him (Matt. x. 18; Luke xxi. 12). The promise of the Spirit is given in a form to exalt, and not to diminish, the importance of the historical facts of the life and teaching of Jesus (John xiv. 15 *seq.*, 25, 26, xv. 24-27, xvi. 14; Luke xxi. 14, 15). The apostle John speaks of himself as an eye-witness (John i. 14, xix. 35, cf. xxi. 24). Luke, at the beginning of his Gospel, refers to his having consulted, with painstaking, those who had heard and witnessed the things to be recorded by him (Luke i. 1-5). His object in writing is to satisfy Theophilus, one in whom he was specially interested, that his Christian belief rested on a good foundation of evidence. It is plain that the apostles and Evangelists are distinctly conscious of their position. They are aware that they have to fulfil the duty of witnesses. There is this barrier against fancy and delusion. It is a great point in favor of their credibility.

2. The apostles never ceased to be conscious that they were *disciples*. They never ceased to look back upon the words and actions of Christ with the profoundest interest, and to regard them as a sacred treasure left in their hands to be communicated to an ever widening circle. In that life as it had actually passed before their eyes, they placed the foundation of all their hope and of the hope of the world. There is not the least sign that any enthusiasm which they felt in their work ever carried them away from this historical anchorage. The precious legacy which they received it devolved on them to convey to others in a spirit of sobriety and conscientiousness, and with such a sense of its value and sacredness, that they were cut off from the temptation to add to it or subtract from it. They were as far as possible from regarding what they had received as a mere starting-point for them to confound with it speculations of their own. They were not "many masters," but continued to hold to the end the reverent, dependent position of learners.

3. The apostles relate, without the least attempt at apology or concealment, instances of ignorance and weakness on their part, together with the reproofs on this account which they received from the Master.

This proves their honesty; but, more than that, it illustrates the *objective* character of their testimony. That they were taken up by the matter itself, so that all personal considerations sank out of sight, is the main fact which we are now endeavoring to illustrate. So absorbing is their interest in what actually occurred, that they do not heed its effect on their own reputation. They do not think of themselves. What exhibits them in an unfavorable light they narrate with as much artless simplicity as if they were not personally affected by it. When Jesus taught them that no defilement could be contracted by eating one rather than another kind of food, at which the Pharisees were offended, Peter asked him to explain "the parable," or obscure saying. They tell us (Matt. xv. 16; Mark vii. 18) that Jesus answered, "Are ye also yet without understanding?" He expressed, they say, astonishment and regret that even they could not divine his meaning. When told to beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees," they obtusely surmised that the injunction had reference to a possible deficiency of bread. They report the severe reproach, which this called forth, of a littleness of faith, a failure to remember the miracle of the loaves (Matt. xvi. 8; Mark viii. 17-21).<sup>1</sup> They tell us how they confessed their own weakness of faith (Luke xvii. 5). Repeatedly they state that they did not comprehend or take in the predictions of his suffering death, which were addressed to them by Jesus. They represent themselves to have clung so tenaciously to the idea of a political Messiah, that after the death of Jesus they expressed their disappointment in the words, "We trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel." And, even after the resurrection, they anxiously required of him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" This false conception of the Messiah's work led to expressions on their part which deeply wounded Jesus. These are faithfully reported by them. They inform us (Matt. xvi. 23; cf. Mark viii. 33; Luke iv. 8) that Peter's protest against the suggestion that Jesus was to suffer death elicited from him such a rebuke as nothing but the feeling that he was tempted to sin by a

<sup>1</sup> The strong expression of grief and weariness, "O faithless and perverse generation!" etc. (Matt. xvii. 17), is omitted above, for the reason that the parallel (Mark ix. 19) makes it, perhaps, doubtful whether the disciples were included among those addressed in the apostrophe. Matt. xvii. 20 would suggest that they were.

friend by whom he ought rather to be supported on the hard path of duty, could evoke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," — adversary of the will of God, tempter, — "for thou art an offence" — a stumbling-block — "unto me; for thou savorest not" — mindest not — "the things that be of God," — God's will, God's cause, — "but those that be of men." This heavy, humiliating rebuke is recorded by all the Synoptists. It entered into the story which the apostles, Peter included, were accustomed to relate. Other instances when they must have felt humbled by the Saviour's displeasure are recorded with the same candor. For example, when they repelled those who brought little children to him, Jesus "was much displeased," and bade them let the children come to him (Mark x. 13, 14; cf. Matt. xix. 14; Luke xviii. 16).

What surer mark of an honest narrator can exist than a willingness to give a plain, unvarnished account of his own mortifying mistakes, and the consequent rebuffs, whether just or not, which he has experienced? When Boswell writes that Johnson said to him, with a stern look, "Sir, I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject," or when an author tells us that his hero said to him, "Sir, endeavor to clear your mind of cant," no one can doubt that the biographer is telling a true story. Men are not likely to invent anecdotes to their own discredit. When we find them in any author, a strong presumption is raised in favor of his general truthfulness.

4. The apostles related, and the Evangelists record, serious delinquencies of which the former were guilty, — unworthy tempers of feeling, and offences of a grave character.

They tell us of the ambition and rivalry which sprang up among them, and of the wrangles that ensued. The mother of John and James petitioned that her sons might have the highest places of honor in the new kingdom, of the nature of which she had so poor a conception (Matt. xx. 20, 21). The two apostles joined in the request (Mark x. 37), having first tried to draw from their Master a promise that they should have whatever they might ask for. The other ten were angry with John and James for preferring such a request (Mark x. 41). One day, on their way to Capernaum, the disciples fell into a dispute on the same question, — who shall have the precedence (Mark ix. 34; cf. Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24). Altercations of this sort, so they themselves related, broke out in

their company on different occasions. Will the reader ponder the fact that all four of the Evangelists give a circumstantial account of the denials of Peter? (Matt. xxvi. 58 *seq.*; Mark xiv. 54 *seq.*; Luke xxii. 54 *seq.*; John xviii. 15 *seq.*) Here was the apostle who had a kind of leadership among them. It was he whose preaching was most effective among the Jews everywhere (Gal. ii. 8). Yet this undisguised account of his cowardice, treachery, and falsehood, on a most critical occasion, is presented in detail in the evangelical narrative. It is impossible to doubt that it formed a part of the story of the crucifixion, which the apostles, each and all of them, told to their converts. Could a more striking proof of simple candor be afforded? Is it not obvious that the narrators sank their own personality—merged it as it were—in the absorbing interest with which they looked back on the scenes which they had beheld, and in which they had taken part? And then they relate that at the crucifixion they all forsook Jesus, and fled (Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 50). They make no attempt to conceal the fact that they left his burial to be performed by one who was comparatively a stranger, and by the women whose devotion overcame their terror, or who considered that their sex would be their safeguard. Beyond the conscientious spirit which this portrayal of their own infirmities and misconduct compels us to attribute to the apostles, these features of the Gospel narrative show that they forgot themselves, so intent were they on depicting things just as they had occurred. In other words, they impress on us the *objective* character of the Gospel history as it is given on the pages of the Evangelists.

5. It is an impressive indication of the *objective* character of the apostolic narrative, that the manifestations of human infirmity in Jesus, infirmity which does not involve sin, are referred to in the plainest manner, and without the least apology or concealment. These passages occur side by side with the accounts of miracles. Had there been a conscious or latent disposition to glorify their Master at the expense of truth, it is scarcely possible that they would have spread out these illustrations of human weakness. It is only necessary to remind the reader of the record of the agony of Jesus in the garden. We are informed that he was overwhelmed with mental distress. He sought the close companionship of the three disciples who were most intimate with him. He prostrated himself on the earth in supplication to God. As he lay on the



ground, one of the Evangelists tells us — if we adopt the accepted reading — that the sweat fell from his body, either actually mingled with blood, or in drops like drops of blood issuing from the wounds of a fallen soldier. “My soul” — thus he had spoken to the three disciples — “is exceeding sorrowful unto death.” In the presence of passages like these, how can it be thought that the apostles were enthusiasts, oblivious or careless of facts, and bent on presenting an ideal of their own devising, rather than the life of Jesus just as they had seen it?<sup>1</sup>

6. The truthfulness of the apostles is proved by their submission to extreme suffering and to death for the testimony which they gave.

They had nothing to gain, from an earthly point of view, by relating the history which is recorded in the Gospels: on the contrary, they had everything to lose. It had been distinctly foretold to them that they would be “delivered up to be afflicted,” delivered up to pain and distress, be objects of universal hatred, and be killed (Matt. xxiv. 9). They were forewarned that they would be seized, imprisoned, brought before rulers as criminals, betrayed by friends and nearest relatives (Luke xxi. 12–16; cf. xi. 49). “The time cometh,” it was said, “that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John xvi. 2; cf. xv. 20, xvi. 33). These predictions were verified in their experience. Whatever view is taken of the authorship of the Gospels, none can doubt that these passages are a picture of what the apostles really endured. The persecution of the apostles was the natural result of the spirit which had prompted the crucifixion of Jesus. It began as soon as they began publicly to preach “Jesus and the resurrection.” There were men, like Saul of Tarsus, eager to hunt down the heretics. The murder of Stephen occurred in the year 33 or 34, about two years after the death of Christ. The apostles were objects of mingled scorn and wrath. Their situation is described by St. Paul as follows: “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death” — or doomed to death, — “for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . . Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no

<sup>1</sup> It does not fall within the plan of John to repeat this narrative of the Synoptists. But John reports an instance of the deep distress of Jesus, “Now is my soul troubled,” etc. (xii. 27). John alone relates that he “wept” (xi. 35).

certain dwelling-place. . . . Being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed, we entreat ; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day " (1 Cor. iv. 9-14). There were certain peculiar exposures to suffering in the case of Paul, yet he describes here the common lot of the apostles. Defamation, public scorn, physical hardship, assaults by mobs, and punishments by the civil authority, imprisonment, death, — this was what they saw before them, and what they actually suffered. Ostracism, with all the indignities and pains that bitter fanaticism can inflict along with it, was the reward which they had to expect for their testimony to the teaching, the miracles, the resurrection, following the death, of Jesus. To suspect them of dishonesty is to imagine that men will fling away property, friends, home, country, and life itself, for the sake of telling a falsehood that is to bring them no sort of advantage.

Hardly less irrational is it to charge them with self-delusion. It has been shown in a preceding chapter, by internal evidence derived from the Gospels, and by other proofs, that miracles were wrought by Christ. It has been shown that the theory of hallucination will not avail to explain the unanimous, immovable belief of the apostles in his resurrection. These men attended Jesus through his public ministry, from the beginning to the close. The occurrences which necessarily presupposed the exertion of miraculous power took place in their presence. They were events in which they had a deep concern. The apostles, to be sure, were not inquisitive naturalists, but they were not wanting in common sense, and they were conscientious men. They were the men whom Jesus Christ selected to be his companions. Unless, as the enemies of Jesus charged, he was "a deceiver," and most accomplished in the art, how could they mistake the character of these works which, as they alleged, he performed before their eyes?

But as the miracles are the part of the Gospel history which in these days chiefly provokes incredulity, it is well, once more, briefly to advert to this topic. No more time need be spent on Hume's argument to show that a miracle is, under no circumstances, capable of being proved. As Mill observes, all that Hume has made out is, that no evidence can prove a miracle to an atheist, or to a deist who supposes himself able to prove that God would not interfere to produce the miraculous event in question.<sup>1</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *System of Logic*, vol. ii. p. 110.

assume the being and moral attributes of God ; and we need not further discuss the character, in other respects, of Hume's reasoning.<sup>1</sup>

As the miracles rest on the same grounds of evidence as the other matters of fact to which the apostles testify, special reasons are required for discrediting their testimony as regards this one class of events. Is it said, "granting that they are possible, they are incredible"? The answer is, that, being a necessary element and the natural adjuncts of revelation, they are not incredible, unless the fact of revelation, and of Christian revelation in particular, is incredible. Their improbability is just as great as, and no greater than, the improbability that God would reveal himself to men, and send his Son to save them. Is it objected that there has been a vast number of pretended miracles? The answer of Bishop Butler appears sufficient; that mankind have not been oftener deluded by these pretences than by others. "Prejudices almost without number and without name, romance, affectation, humor, a desire to engage attention or to surprise, the party-spirit, custom, little competitions, unaccountable likings and dislikings — these influence men strongly in common matters." As they are not reflected on by those in whom they operate, their effect is like that of enthusiasm. And yet, as Butler adds, human testimony in common matters is not, on this account, discredited. Because *some* narratives of miracles spring out of mere enthusiasm, it is an unwarrantable inference that *all* are to be accounted for in this way.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, ch. iv. On Pagan and Ecclesiastical Miracles, see Appendix, Note, p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> What is said in the Gospels of Jesus prior to his public ministry calls for special remark. Of this portion of his life, the apostles were not directly cognizant. With regard to it they were dependent upon others for information. The brief and fragmentary character of the introductory narratives in Matthew and Luke is adapted to inspire confidence, rather than distrust, since it indicates authentic tradition as the probable source of them. The most important fact contained in them is the miraculous conception. For the historical truth of this record, there is proof in the circumstance that Matthew's and Luke's narratives are from separate sources, and are complementary to each other. Moreover, these sources are Jewish. Certainly Luke's account is from a Jewish Christian document. There was nothing in Jewish ideas to lead to the origination of a myth of this sort. As for Judaizing Christians, they would be the last to imagine an incident so contrary to their dogmatic tendencies. As to Isa. vii. 14, there is no proof that it had been applied by the Jews to the Messiah; and the Hebrew term used there did not necessarily denote an unmarried person. Luke repeatedly refers to the recollections of

We are not called upon to confute the opinion that the first three Gospels — the historical character of the fourth has already been vindicated — were moulded by a doctrinal purpose or bias, since that opinion finds no countenance now from judicious critics of whatever theological creed. The first Gospel contains numerous passages in which the catholic character of Christianity is emphatically set forth.<sup>1</sup> "Our Matthew," says Mangold, an unprejudiced critic, not at all wedded to traditional views, "is, to be sure, written by a Jewish Christian for Jewish Christians"; "but he has given us no writing with a Jewish Christian doctrinal bias." "The words of Jesus quoted in Matthew," says Reuss, "which form the doctrinal kernel of the book, are not selected in the slightest degree from that point of view," — that of the Palestinian Jewish Christianity, — "but go beyond it in a hundred places, and bespeak so much the more the faithfulness of the tradition."<sup>2</sup> Mark has decidedly outgrown Judaism; "but no dogmatic ten-

Mary respecting the early days of Jesus (Luke ii. 19, 51). It is probable that she lived at Jerusalem with John. "She kept in her heart" all the sayings [or things] connected with Jesus when he was twelve years old (Luke ii. 51). It is not strange if a knowledge of the circumstances concerning his birth was slow in reaching the ears of his followers, or that early genealogies should assume Joseph to have been his father. That John and Paul do not connect the Saviour's divinity, or even his sinlessness, with his miraculous birth, goes to prove that doctrinal belief did not engender the story. Luke's designation of Jesus as holy, in connection with his miraculous conception (Luke i. 35; cf. Matt. i. 20), is not equivalent to sinlessness. If the origination of such a myth could be credited to Gentile Christians, which, especially at so early a date, is an unlikely supposition, we could not account for its adoption in the circle of Palestinian Jewish Christians. How the idea of a miraculous element in the birth of "the second Adam" comports with the function that was to belong to him as a new creative potency in humanity, together with the force of the historical proofs, is cogently presented by Neander, *Leben Jesu*, pp. 14 *seq.* See also the instructive discussion of Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, i. 212 *seq.* That difficulties should exist in connection with details in the narratives of the opening period of Christ's life, which are collected in Matthew and Luke, is to be expected. It is natural that Strauss should make the most of them. The subject of the miraculous birth is fairly and instructively handled by Sanday, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 642 *seq.* For valuable remarks of Professor Ramsay on this topic, see his *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 11, ix. 16 *seq.*, xii. 8, xiii. 31, xx. 1 *seq.*, xxi. 28, 33, xxii. 40, xxiii. 33, xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19; cf. *Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity*, pp. 213-215; Reuss, *Gesch. d. heilig. Schrift. d. N. T.*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesch.*, etc., p. 194.



dency can on this account be saddled on his presentation of the Gospel history, as long as it is not shown that Christ himself did not rise above Judaism, and that the Jewish Christian Matthew looks on Christianity as a development within the limits of Judaism."<sup>1</sup> In Luke, "not only does the history of Jesus acquire in general no other significance than in Matthew, nowhere is there disclosed a design to set aside or to overcome an imperfect understanding of it: on the contrary, there occur numerous words and acts, drawn from the general tradition, which, when literally taken, rather wear a Jewish Christian coloring. But here it will be nearest to the truth to affirm that not a party feeling, but the most independent historical research, — or, if we prefer so to call it, a thirst for the fullest possible information, — has governed in the collection of the matter."<sup>2</sup> The whole charge of being *Tendenz-Schriften*, which Baur and his school brought against the Gospels, is founded on untenable theories respecting their authorship and order of composition.

If the "tendency-theory" no longer calls for detailed refutation, the same thing is true of the attack of Strauss on the credibility of the Gospels, which is founded on their alleged inconsistencies. This attack is now acknowledged by judicious scholars to be merely the work of an expert advocate, bent on finding contradictions in testimony which he is anxious to break down.<sup>3</sup> The Gospel narratives are wholly inartificial. No compositions could be more open to assault from critics who ignore this character that belongs to them, and labor to magnify the importance of variations which serve to prove that there was no collusion among the several writers, and no attempt on the part of anybody to frame a story that should be proof against hostile comment.<sup>4</sup>

Over and above particular evidences of trustworthiness, such as have just been stated, there is one token even more impressive than single items of this nature, a token which the unlearned reader of the Gospels must feel to be convincing. It is the portraiture of the character of Jesus which the Evangelists present

<sup>1</sup> Mangold-Bleek, *Einl. in d. N. T.*, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> Reuss, p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> A full reply to Strauss on this topic is made in the present writer's *The Supernatural Origin of Christianity*, ch. vi.

<sup>4</sup> For remarks on discrepancies in the Gospels, see Appendix, Note ooo.



alike before the eyes of the simple and the cultured. We see in a concrete form an ideal which these writers could never have themselves originated. Composed of numerous disconnected elements, it stands forth a consistent, living picture which has called forth the homage and moved the hearts of succeeding generations. This image of Jesus presented in artless narrations demonstrates their verity. Of the Galilean fishermen and their humble associates it has been said by a teacher trained in letters and philosophy that, "if it be an unreal creation of their own, we will worship them."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH TO THE BIBLE AND TO BIBLICAL CRITICISM

THE critical discussions which are rife in our times respecting the Bible, the authorship of its various books, and the historical value and normal authority of their contents make it important to consider the bearing of these inquiries and debates on the Christian faith. What is the relation of the collection of writings which we call the Bible to the religion of Christ? How far is a particular doctrine on the subject of the Scriptures requisite for a theoretical or a practical reception of the Gospel in its just import and proper efficacy? Do the verdicts of critical science imperil, or are they likely to imperil, the foundations on which Christianity, considered as an experience of the soul, or as a body of beliefs concerning God and man, the life that now is, and the world hereafter, reposes?

So much is clear at the outset, that what we know of the historical and doctrinal parts of Christianity is ascertained almost exclusively from the Bible. The same is true of our knowledge of the origin and growth of that entire religious system which is consummated in the work and teaching of Christ and of the apostles. It is not less plain that the nutriment of Christian piety is derived chiefly from the pages of Sacred Scripture. The instrumentalities of human teaching, the activities of the Church in building up Christian character, and the rest of the manifold agencies through which the power of religion is kept alive in the individual and in society, draw their vitality from the Bible. The habit of resorting to the Bible for spiritual quickening and direction is the indispensable condition of religious life among Christians. The practical proof of the inspiration of Holy Scripture — the preëminence of this volume above all other books known to men — is found in this life-giving power that abides in it, and remains undiminished, from age to age, in all the mutations of literature, and amid the

diverse types and advancing stages of culture and civilization. The general proposition, that the Bible is at once the fountain of spiritual light and life, the prime source of religious knowledge, and the rule of faith and guide of conduct among Christians, admits of no contradiction.

But this general theorem does not cut off those special problems and distinctions which, with a view to exact definition and qualification, constitute biblical criticism, as that branch of study is at present understood. It could not be that the traditional views which were handed down from the Church of the fourth century, through the middle ages, uncritical to some extent as those views were in their inception, should escape the scrutiny of a more searching and scientific era. The Renaissance awakened a fresh intellectual life and an inquisitive spirit. The liberty of thought which the Reformation brought in was attended at the outset with a more discriminating and a more free handling of questions pertaining to the origin and character of the books of Scripture, as the example of Luther notably illustrates. The separation of the Old Testament apocrypha from the Scriptural canon was one consequence of this more bold and enlightened spirit of inquiry. The exigencies of controversy with the Roman Catholics begot among Protestant teachers of dogmatic theology, in the next age, a more scrupulously conservative method of shaping the doctrine respecting the inspiration of biblical books than a number of great leaders in the Protestant movement had adopted. The authority of the Bible, in opposition to the Tridentine principle of church authority, was so construed as to lay fetters upon the critical spirit among the Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century. The maxim of Chillingworth, himself a theological writer of a liberal cast, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants," was the parent generally of the dogma that the Scriptures are in all respects impeccable. More and more the rise and spread of the scientific spirit—the spirit which pursues truth alone as its goal, casting aside every bias as tending to blind the eye, and sifting evidence with an unsparing rigor—could not fail to affect this department of knowledge. More and more the spirit of candid and exhaustive and fearless investigation, which is the legitimate child of the Protestant movement, insisted upon testing the prevalent impressions concerning the Bible and its various parts, by the strict rules that govern impartial investigation in every other province. Literary criticism,

which concerns itself with the correctness of the received text and with the authorship and date of the several books, with their real or alleged discrepancies ; natural and physical science, exploring the origin of the earth and of its inhabitants, and of the stellar spheres above ; historical and archæological study, exhuming relics of the past, and deciphering monuments of bygone ages, — these branches of knowledge bring, each of them, conclusions of its own to be placed in juxtaposition and comparison with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Biblical criticism was something inevitable. It sprang up within the pale of the Church. Its most valuable contributions have been made by Christian scholars. It is true that disbelievers in the divine mission of Jesus, and even in the supernatural altogether, have sometimes devoted themselves to these inquiries. It is a blunder and an injustice, however, on the part of Christians, and a false boast on the part of their adversaries, when on either side it is affirmed that biblical criticism, and the verified results of it, are principally due to efforts of scholars without sympathy with the Church and with the cause of religion.

Enough has been said respecting the exalted function of Scripture to preclude misapprehension when we proceed to remark that the Bible is one thing and Christianity is another. The religion of Christ, in the right signification of these terms, is not to be confounded with the scriptures, even of the New Testament. The point of view from which the Bible, as related to Christianity, is looked on as the Koran appears to devout Mohammedans, is a mistaken one. The entire conception according to which the energies of the Divine Being, as exerted in the Christian revelation, are thought to have been concentrated on the production of a book, is a misconception, and one that is prolific of error.

1. The revelation of God which culminates in the Gospel, so far from being a naked communication let down from the skies, is in and through a process of redemption. Redemption is an effect wrought in the souls of men and in human society. Christianity is a new spiritual creation in humanity. The product is "new creatures in Christ Jesus," — a moral transformation of mankind. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world . . . ye are the salt of the earth." From them was to go forth an illuminating, renovating power. Seeing their good works, attracted by their spirit, other men were to be brought to the Father. The brotherhood of Christian believers was the dwelling-place in which

the living God made his abode: they were his "house," as the temple was his house under the former dispensation.<sup>1</sup> They are expressly declared to be the "temple" of God, in which his Spirit abides.<sup>2</sup> The "pillar and ground of truth"—that which upholds the truth in the world, and is like a foundation underneath it—is the Church. It is not said to be books which had been written, or which were to be written, but the community of faithful souls.<sup>3</sup> A society had been brought into being,—a people of God, with an open eye to discern spiritual things. A vine-stock had been planted, the branches of which, if they did not dis sever themselves, would bear fruit.

2. Revelation is historical: the means of revelation are primarily the dealings of God with men. The revelation of God to the Hebrew people was made through the providential guidance and government which determined the course of their history. When the sacred writers—as the authors of the Psalms, or inspired orators like the protomartyr Stephen—speak of divine revelation, they recount the ways in which God in the past has led his people. The appeal is to the disclosure of God in the providential history of his people. Especially do they recall the manifestation of God in the deliverance from bondage in Egypt by the hand of Moses, in the leading of Israel through the wilderness, in the conquest of the land which they inhabited, in the various instances of national prosperity and national disaster which followed. Events had been so ordered, signal rewards had been seen so to alternate with signal chastisements, that God was more and more brought home to their minds and hearts in his true character. The nations generally valued their divinities for the protection and help which they afforded. This was the ordinary heathen view. Under the divine training of the Israelites, they rose to a higher and altogether different conception. So established did their faith become that national downfall, and what seemed utter ruin, did not signify that Jehovah was powerless. These calamities were the chastisement inflicted on them by God himself. It was not that God was overcome by stronger powers; it was he himself who had brought on them defeat and exile, and the desolation of their altars and homes. Hence they were moved to cling to him all the closer. They were saved from complete

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iii. 2, 5, x. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 17, cf. Ephes. ii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16, . . . <sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 15.



despair. They could believe that God might not have utterly forsaken them. They ascended to a higher point of view. They learned to contemplate God both as holy, as actuated by ethical motives in his government, as just to punish, and merciful to spare and to forgive the contrite, and as the Ruler, not of themselves alone, but of the whole earth. The thread of his all-governing purpose and will ran, not through the history of Israel alone, but through the fate and fortunes of all nations. By experiences of actual life under the providential sway of God, their knowledge of him expanded, their communion with him became more intimate and more intelligent. A father discloses himself to his children by his management of them from day to day and from year to year. His smile rewards them. He frowns upon them when they go astray. They are trained to confide in him. They know him more and more as they live under his care, and witness the manifestation of his qualities in the successive periods of their lives. The didactic element is not wanting. The father teaches, as well as guides and governs. Explanation, admonition,—it may be, outpourings of grief and affection,—are intermingled with the instruction contained in act and deed. His dealings with them are not left to be misinterpreted. Their purport is made clear, if need be, by verbal elucidation. They are intermingled with counsel and command. Somewhat after this manner, in the course of the history of Israel, “the servant” of the Lord, not only were heroes raised up providentially to lead armies, and administer civil affairs, but holy men were called upon the stage to make known the meaning of the doings of God, to point the presumptuous and the desponding to the future, to give voice to the spirit of prayer and praise which the character of God, and his relation to them, should appropriately inspire. Prophets, with vision clarified by light shining into their souls from above, expounded the providential dealings of God, read aloud his purposes discovered in them, commanded, warned, and consoled in his name.

If we turn to the revelation of God in the Gospel, we observe the same method. It is an historical manifestation. A child is born at Bethlehem, and brought up at Nazareth, consecrated by baptism in the Jordan, collects about him a company of chosen followers, lives in intercourse with men, performs miracles of healing and deliverance, dies, and reappears from the tomb. He teaches; and his teaching is indispensable to the effect to be pro-

duced, and is most precious. But his own person and character, his deeds of power and mercy, his voluntary submission to death, his resurrection, ascension, and continued agency through the Spirit,—it is in these facts and transactions that the Gospel centres. They are the material, the vehicle, of revelation. The didactic element is to open the eye to their intrinsic significance. It is to insure against misunderstanding, and to impress on the hearts and minds of men the inherent meaning of these deeds of God in human history.

3. The persons and transactions through which revelation is made, one must remember, are anterior to the Scriptures that relate to them. The apostle Paul traces back the line of God's people to the faith of their nomadic ancestor. This faith preceded, of course, every record of it, and everything that was written about it. There could be no story of divine judgments and deliverances, and of their effect on the religious consciousness of the people, prior to the occurrences in question and to the observation of their result. As fast as sacred literature arose, its influence would be more or less felt; but this literature presupposed and rested on a progressive religious life and on the historical forces which fostered as well as originated it. The great fact of the old dispensation, its palpable outcome, was a people imbued with the spirit of a pure theism, separated from the heathen world by the possession of an exalted faith in God, and of a great hope of redemption inseparably conjoined with it—a people bearing witness to God in the midst of the pagan world. In like manner the Church of the new covenant preceded the New Testament writings. Jesus himself wrote nothing. As far as we know, at the date of his ascension, nothing respecting him had been put in writing. His words, his miracles, the things that he suffered, his resurrection, were unrecorded. Not less than a score of years may have passed before those first essays at recording what the disciples knew respecting his life, which Luke notices in his prologue, were composed. The oldest writings in the New Testament collection are certain Epistles of Paul, which were called out by his necessary absence from churches, or by special emergencies. Yet the Christian faith was in being; the Church was in being; the Gospel was preached; the testimony of the apostles was spread abroad; numerous converts were made. Christianity was not made by the Christian Scriptures.

4. On the contrary, the Scriptures are the product of the Church. They do not create the community; the community creates them. The histories of the Old Testament record the progress and fortunes of the people. The historians are of the people to which their writings relate. The prophets, with whatever divine gifts of insight and foresight they are endued, spring, in like manner, out of the people. The fire that spreads along the earth here and there shoots upward, and sends its light afar. The psalm is the inspired expression of the devotion of the great congregation gathered within the temple. Even the Proverbs have an origin and a stamp among the chosen people which make them analogous to the proverb elsewhere, "The wisdom of many, and the wit of one."

As the Gospels were for the Church, so they were from the Church. Apostles and their disciples composed them to meet a want in the community in which the authors were members as well as guides. The Epistles were the product of the Church, as well as means of its edification. Their authors were moved by the same Spirit, with whatever difference of mode and of measure, as the membership among whom they ranked themselves as brethren. There was not even an intention to compose a body of sacred literature. The purpose of Providence went beyond the writers' intent. The very word "Bible," denoting a single book, results from a blunder. A Greek word, in the plural, signifying originally "books," it was mistaken in the middle ages for a Latin noun of the first declension singular. It was not until the oral teaching of the apostles was beginning to be forgotten, and their immediate disciples were passing away, that the churches bethought themselves to gather together in a volume the writings of the apostles, and writings having an apostolic character. The canon was of slow and gradual formation.

The fundamental reality is not the Bible, it is the kingdom of God. This is not a notion. Rather is it a real historical fact, and the grandest of all facts. No other kingdom or commonwealth ever had a more substantial being. It is older than any other; it has proved itself stronger and more enduring than any other; if there is any good ground for the Christian's faith, it will embrace or overspread them all. What is this kingdom? It is the society of believers in God — the society of his loyal subjects and children. In its immature stage, under the old dispensation,

it existed in the form of an organized political community. Among the nations there lived one people which had true thoughts respecting God, into whose hearts he put true thoughts respecting himself. They became conscious—it was he who inspired them with the consciousness—of standing in an immediate, peculiar relation to him. That they were a “chosen people” was a conviction ineradicably planted within them. Has not this conviction of theirs been verified in the subsequent history of mankind? They were made to feel that they were not thus distinguished for their own sake, or on account of any merit of their own, but were chosen to be witnesses for God to the rest of mankind. There was a divine purpose of redemption, in which the entire race was to have a share. In the divine intent, to recover mankind from evil, and to make the whole earth the abode of righteousness and peace, was the ultimate goal. The civil polity and the laws of the chosen people were to reflect the will of God as made known from time to time through holy and inspired men. The whole course of their lives was to be regulated by prescriptions issuing from the same divine source. After the monarchical form of government was established, revelation still remained the source of law. Side by side with the kings there stood the prophets to declare the divine will, to rebuke the iniquitous ruler, and, if need be, to exhort the people to disobedience. In the complex progress of the world toward the ideal of human perfection, other peoples, on the plane of nature, had their respective parts to fulfil. The one supreme concern of this Hebrew nation was, and was felt to be, religion. Their function among the nations of the earth was consciously wrapped up in this one interest. As they well knew, other religions besides their own were national. All ancient religions were national.

But other religions were on false foundations, and were doomed to pass away. When the political independence of the Israelites was lost, their civil polity shattered, the conquered people dragged off into idolatrous lands, this consciousness of being possessed of the true religion, and of a grand and triumphant future awaiting them, not only survived but grew more confident. It not only outlived political ruin; under overwhelming calamities it burned with a more intense fervor. More strange than all, there was a foresight of a great advance to be made in the intrinsic character of this divinely given religion, as well as in the extent of the do-

minion to be gained by it. The basis of the religion was the covenant of God with the people. Under this term the ethical relation of Israel with God, whom Israel worshipped, was conceived and expressed. The laws and institutions, with the blessings and hopes for the future which they expressed and betokened, were interpreted as the conditional promise of the merciful but righteous Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> But the days were to come when there was to be "a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Religion was one day to become more spiritual; obedience would then no longer be legal or constrained, but spontaneous; the knowledge of God and his ways would be confined to no class, but would be diffused among all; forgiveness would be full and free. Such is the remarkable prediction of the prophet Jeremiah. Centuries flowed on, the great hope was a hope deferred; but the epoch, thus foreseen, at last arrived. The Person through whom was to be achieved this vast revolution and expansion of the kingdom, dimly discerned from afar in certain grand outlines, at length appeared. Jesus, the Christ, became the founder of a spiritual and universal society. Whoever will look into the Gospels will see that it was in this character of the head of a kingdom that he appeared. It was of the kingdom of God that John, the forerunner, spoke, as near at hand. It was for professing to be a king, however the nature of that claim was misrepresented by his accusers, that Christ was put to death. The prophecy began to be realized when he commenced to teach and to attract to himself disciples. The kingdom was there. This he taught when, in answer to the question when the kingdom was to begin to be, he said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"; "lo! . . . the kingdom of God is within you," or in the midst of you. The kingdom was constituted by Jesus and the group of disciples who acknowledged him as Lord and Master, and who, like him, were devoted to the doing of the Father's will. This last was the criterion of membership in the kingdom, and of a title to its blessings. Those who were one with Jesus in this filial allegiance were hailed by him as brother and sister and mother. Yet the consummation of the kingdom lay in the future. Hence the kingdom, although a present reality, was a kingdom in the bud, and therefore a kingdom to come—to come in a double

<sup>1</sup> The history and ideas linked to the word "covenant" are concisely stated by A. B. Davidson, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 509 seq.



sense, in its moral progress among mankind and in mysterious final scenes of judgment and victory. So that the prayer of all disciples was still to be, "Thy kingdom come"—a supplication that points both to the continuous progress and transforming influence of the Gospel in the world, and to the goal of that progress, the final epoch. Precisely how "the kingdom of Christ" or "the kingdom of heaven" should be defined is a point on which all are not agreed. It was declared by Jesus not to be a "kingdom of this world." Its origin was not earthly, but from above. It was not, like human sovereignties, to be maintained and spread by force. The end of the Founder's mission was to bear witness to the truth. The kingdom was to be made up of those who heard his voice, who believed and obeyed the witness which he gave. In the ancient era of the Church there was the Byzantine idea, which tended to regard the Christian state, with the Roman emperor at its head, as the realization of the kingdom. In the West it was the Church in its visible organization under the Papacy that was identified with the kingdom of Christ. A broader view would bring within the circumference of the kingdom all the baptized, in whatever Christian fold. A still broader view is that which includes within its pale all souls who, accepting Christ as their Lord and Saviour, live to do the Father's will.

No view of the divine kingdom is adequate which fails to see that the end of its establishment is the transformation of human society. The rescue of individuals from sin and punishment is far from being the whole good to be achieved through the instrumentality of revealed religion. Its ethical relations are never to be ignored or undervalued. It is here on earth that the will of God is to be done. It is here that the desert is "to rejoice, and blossom as the rose." The aim of the divine kingdom was and is to renovate political and social life. "Judaism," a recent writer has well said, "was not a religion merely, but a polity, its aim being the establishment of righteousness in the relations of men within the commonwealth; the political and moral laws and the national organization form its central point, its kings and judges being in the fullest sense ministers of God." Nothing less was designed by the later, the Christian dispensation, following upon the earlier, than "the establishment and maintenance of true relations throughout the whole body of a united and organized humanity, under the influence of the Christian spirit of righteous-

ness and love." As a means to this end the Church exists — an organized community, consisting of a portion of human society in which the renewing power of the Gospel has been experienced.

One might as well doubt whether the sun is in the sky as to question the reality of that new creation which gives its distinctive character to "the Christian era." Out of Judaism there has come into being a spiritual and universal society, however it may be more precisely defined, and whatever disputes may exist as to its boundaries. It may be added here that all organized bodies which hold the Christian faith, including the Church of Rome as well as Protestants, unite in pronouncing that the complete deposit of revealed truth was with Christ and the apostles. The Church of Rome makes tradition an authorized channel for the transmission of this truth. But all agree that Christianity is the absolute religion. There is a progress in the understanding of it from age to age. But the religion itself is not defective, and therefore is not perfectible. Christianity is not to be put in the same category with the ethnic religions, which contain an admixture of error, and are capable of being indefinitely improved. The religion of the Gospel is absolute. The allegiance of the follower of Christ is unqualified. "Ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so am I."

Keeping in view this historic kingdom which stands forth as an objective reality, beginning in the distant past and carried forward to its perfected form by Jesus of Nazareth, we have to inquire what is the relation of the Holy Scriptures to it. The answer is that they are the documents that make us acquainted with the kingdom in its consecutive stages up to its completed form. In the Scriptures we are made acquainted with the facts and the meaning of the facts. And as in the case of all documentary materials viewed in contrast with literary products of later elaboration, we are brought face to face with the historic transactions and with the persons who took part in them. This is the peculiar character of the Scriptures, and is at once the secret of their transcendent value and the occasion of countless obscurities and difficulties. By no other means could we become possessed of knowledge so immediate and so vivid. Yet they give occasion for the same sort of inquiries that always devolve, in historical investigation, on those who delve in the sources.

Let us take an illustration from secular history. We will sup-

pose that the later narratives, such as those of Bancroft and Palfrey, by which a New Englander learns the origin and growth of the communities to which he belongs, and their historic relations to other parts of America, had not been written — the narratives, we mean, which are based on documentary materials, including under this head prior accounts whose authors stood nearer to the circumstances which they relate than the historians of to-day. We are shut up, we will imagine, to this mass of documentary materials. There is Bradford's pathetic story of the Pilgrims, of their flight from their English home to Holland, their voyage across the Atlantic, their settlement and their experiences at Plymouth. We have other writings also, — the "Compact of Government" drawn up in the cabin of the *Mayflower*; the diary and the letters of John Winthrop, the Massachusetts governor; the earlier and later codes of colonial law; the "Bay Psalm Book"; Cotton Mather's "Magnalia"; later still, the history of Hutchinson, and along with other productions we have discourses of the most influential preachers in the successive generations. As we approach the epoch of the Revolution we have the letters and speeches of the patriotic leaders; the records of the first congresses, local and general; the Declaration of Independence; contemporary accounts of the war that followed; the Constitution of the United States, and expositions of it by Madison and others who took part in framing it; official papers of the first President and his cabinet, etc. Imagine a comprehensive collection of these documents. It would consist of prose and poetry, of orations, disquisitions, letters, and so forth. Obviously there would be inconveniences, especially to an untrained, unlearned student. There would be things hard to understand, obscure allusions, apparent and real discrepancies of more or less consequence. Questions of chronology would arise, and might be difficult to solve — such as pertain to the date of laws and usages, and of written memorials of the past. A consecutive history prepared by a modern student of sound critical judgment would plainly have its advantages. But one superlative advantage it would fail to have. The reader would not, in anything like an equal degree, be brought into the atmosphere of the former days. He would not, in anything like an equal degree, come into living contact with the events and into direct personal intercourse with the participants in them. His impressions, if in some particulars

more exact and more systematic, would lack the color, would want the vividness, which are to be caught only from the documentary sources. The difference is like that between a treatise on geography, or even the descriptions of a traveller, and an actual journey through a country which we seek to know. Let one read either of the numerous lives of Jesus which have been written by learned scholars in recent times, even when imaginative power reënforces the erudition of the author, and then turn to the pages of the Evangelists. He will feel at once the difference between second-hand and first-hand accounts; between those who see through their own eyes and those who have to use the eyes of others. The modern scholars furnish us with collateral information of value, illustrative of the Gospels; they collate the several narrators; they apply the canons of historical criticism with more or less skill; but where is that living, speaking portrait of Jesus, of his walk and his talk, which the original historians, the apostles and their companions, give us? It is the difference between the herbarium and the leaves and flowers in field or forest. In the herbarium the classification is better, but we miss the bright hues and the perfume of the blossoms. To the botanist the herbarium is important, and botany is a useful science in its place. But the rose-bush, or a grape-vine with the clusters of fruit hanging upon it, has a charm of its own which the botanist not more than the unlettered man would be willing to spare.

The beginnings of old kingdoms and empires are commonly obscure. They start on their career in the twilight. It is not until the day has fairly dawned, until some progress has been made on the path of civilization, that written records arise to be transmitted to later times. Even then, contemporary writings are likely to be scanty and fragmentary. Traditions exist and are handed down, but they are subject to the influences that affect the oral transmission of narrative matter from generation to generation. Thus when the past comes to be studied in an enlightened age, there is no escape from the necessity of historical criticism. The historical student, like other laborers, has to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. The facts of a remote time are to be reached only by exploring in places where the light is dim. Great rivers may traverse empires, spreading fertility along their banks; but we have to hunt for their sources. If the cir-

cumstances of the rise of the kingdom of God are parallel, there is no good reason for surprise.

The foregoing remarks may throw some light on the question how Christianity stands affected by biblical criticism. The Christian faith is expressed in a summary form in the ancient document known as the Apostles' Creed. In its doctrinal aspect, the Christian faith was formulated early in the fourth century, in the creed called the Nicene, which, as to its main affirmations, has been accepted by most organized bodies of Christians. Neither of these confessions makes any declaration relative to the origin of scriptural books or the kind and degree of authority that pertains to them. They are silent on the subject. It is Christianity in its cardinal facts and principles which they undertake to set forth. This does not imply an undervaluing of the importance of the question of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. It illustrates, however, the point that the Christian system of truth is separable in thought from varying phases of opinion respecting the origin and characteristics of the Scriptures.

The perception of divine revelation as having for its end the building up of a community or kingdom, and as made at the basis through a history transacted on the earth, lifts us to a plane where critical problems, within a certain reasonable limit, may be regarded with comparative indifference. Within that limit literary questions having to do with the authorship of books, as, for example, whether it be simple or composite, and whether traditional impressions as to authorship are well founded; questions having to do, also, with the correctness of the text which has been transmitted to us; questions as to the order of succession in the stages of development through which the community of God has passed; questions as to the faultless accuracy of details in historical narratives, are no longer felt to be of vital moment. They are not points on which the Christian religion stands or falls. The timidity which springs out of the idea of Christianity as exclusively a book religion, every line in whose sacred books is clothed with the preternatural sanctity ascribed by Mohammedan devotees to their sacred writings, is dissipated. The Christian believer, as long as fundamental verities and the foundations on which they stand are unassailed, is no more disturbed by the unveiling of the human factor in the origination of the Scriptures, and by finding that it played a more extensive part than was once supposed. The



treasure is not lost because it is distinctly perceived to be held "in earthen vessels."

In the illustrations given above from American history the literature referred to was in the main contemporary with the writings. This advantage we have approximately in the use of the New Testament. Critical questions connected with the Old Testament books and their contents present peculiar difficulties. Yet, on this topic, a single observation may be made, which will serve still further to elucidate the meaning of what has been said above. The observation is, that the religion of Christ stands in an organic relation to the Old Testament religion, and that this connection, in its most essential features, is an historical fact that admits of no rational doubt, whatever views may be taken on other topics pertaining to Old Testament literature. The people that gave birth to Jesus Christ were a people marked by distinctive peculiarities, which are well known, abundantly attested, and universally allowed to have existed. They were worshippers of one God, a living God, a Spirit, the Creator and sole Sovereign of the universe. Along with this peculiar, exalted theism there had come to exist the Messianic expectation. There was to be a great expansion, purification, triumph, of the kingdom of God — the community of his worshippers. There was to be a deliverance. There was to be a world-wide extension of the true religion. These are acknowledged facts. How did that state of things come to be? How did that peculiar community grow into being, which furnished the human and temporal conditions of the birth and career of Jesus? How shall we explain that he was born of Israel, and not of the Greeks or Egyptians? There is no dispute on the question whether there is a close, organic connection between the religion of Palestine and the religion of Christ. It is a fact too patent to be doubted for a moment.

Back of that peculiar religion, and that whole state of things which existed in the Palestinian community and its foreign offshoots at the time when Jesus was born, there lies a history. So vast and spreading a tree is not without deep roots. It is perfectly obvious that the Old Testament books are the principal, if not the exclusive, documents from which we can acquaint ourselves with the rise and progress of that unique religion which was the precursor and the parent of Christianity. From them we must learn who were the human leaders, civil and religious, through whose

mediation that religion advanced from its beginnings, and attained to the stage of development which it is found to have reached at the approach of the Christian era. Now, inquiries may be started as to the order of succession in the laws and in the institutions of worship, which were not always the same, and even as to what precisely was done and contributed by this or that inspired leader or teacher. These questions do not necessarily touch Christianity in any vital part. They do not necessarily affect in a vital way the view that is taken of the history of the people of Israel. Investigations of Roman history, even when they require the modification of previous ideas, do not alter fundamentally our conception of the growth, the polity, and the power of the Roman Empire. They only make still clearer the ruling ideas that animated the Roman people. The history of England is not written now as it was written a hundred years ago ; but the existence of the English monarchy, and the turning-points in its origin and growth, are left untouched by the scrutiny of historical criticism.

Students of the Old Testament generally enlarge the earliest group of historical books by adding to it the Book of Joshua, thus making a "Hexateuch" instead of a Pentateuch. They generally consider the series of books to be composed of a number of different documents, varying from one another in their original dates, with serious variations not a few in their historic details and interpretations. Not only the books in their present form, but the constituent documents are considered to have been far later in their origin than tradition had taught. One consequence of the change of opinion is a common conception of the order of events, the reverse of the ordinary view. The period of the prophets is considered to have preceded that of the law and of the Hebrew ritual as it is set forth in the Hexateuch. It is a diversity as to historic theory, or, a geologist might say, in stratification. The most striking effect of this new chronology is the contraction of the bounds of contemporary history and of the historical sources, and the consequent loss, as far as the primitive era is concerned, of the contemporary evidence which is a principal guaranty of trustworthy narratives. Literary criticism in this field joins hands with the researches in general history and in archæology which pertain to prehistoric ages. The biblical era most affected in this way is the pre-patriarchal. In this particular the patriarchal period comes next, showing a perceptible advance.

The marks of historic credibility increase at the threshold of the Mosaic era. But one characteristic of the Old Testament narratives stands out in distinct relief. It is the fact of divine revelation. It is evident from the very first verse of Genesis that the legends of the Babylonians and other tribes kindred to the Hebrews have been sifted of their polytheistic elements. One of the most eminent and liberal-minded of modern German theologians was guilty of no exaggeration in the remark that the first three chapters of Genesis contain more moral and religious truth than all other books written independently of the influence of the Bible. Among the Hebrews the conception of a tribal deity by degrees grows into that of a supreme sovereign, righteous in his character, with an expanded, even a world-wide control. This purifying and elevating effect, this monotheistic, ethical faith, so in contrast with Semitic history elsewhere, is inexplicable save on the supposition that it is due to the self-revelation of God. The same fact in the Hebrew religion is presupposed in the rise and progress of the Messianic expectation. The progress of the Hebrew religion from its earliest stages, as the Old Testament brings it to light, must have been conditioned on the appearance of leaders inspired to guide the people onward and about whom the people could rally. Whatever may be true of individuals described as such, their historic reality and influence at the great turning-points have a strong inherent probability.

Even the critics who carry the theory of non-Mosaic authorship to the point of denying that the decalogue, at least in the form in which it stands, proceeds from its reputed human author, do not, as a rule, call in question the fact that Moses was the founder of the legislation and religious institutions of the nation of Israel. Reuss, who was one of the most original and learned of the critics of the modern school, emphatically declares<sup>1</sup> that the agency of Moses was of so influential and far-reaching a character that in the whole course of the history of Israel, prior to Jesus, there appeared no personage to be compared with him. He towers above all that followed in the long line of heroes and prophets. If the codes, as it would seem, were kept open, still on any view that does not pass the bounds of reason, "the law came by Moses." The recollection of the leadership of Moses, of his grand and dominating agency in the deliverance of the people from bondage,

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte d. heiligen Schriften d. A. T.*, vol. i.

and in laying the foundations of their theocratic polity, was indelibly stamped upon the Hebrew mind. To discredit a tradition so deeply rooted in the generations that followed would be a folly of incredulity. It might almost be said that the voice of the great Lawgiver reverberates down the subsequent ages of Hebrew history, until the appearance of him whose teaching fulfilled, and in that sense superseded, the utterances of them "of old time." Ewald has dwelt impressively on the living memory, the memory of the heart, transmitted from father to son, of the great redemption from Egyptian slavery—the standing type of the mighty spiritual deliverance to be achieved by a greater than Moses. If Moses was in reality so effective an agent in forming the Israelitish nation and in shaping its peculiar system; if, in truth, so powerful an impulse emanated from him as critics so competent as Reuss allow, the question is naturally suggested, whether there would be wholly wanting (since the art of writing was then well known) contemporary records, and something from the pen of Moses himself. If there is nothing improbable in the tradition that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then it would be no marvel if, to some extent, he committed his laws and injunctions to writing. But these are critical inquiries upon which we are not called on here to dilate.

In defining the attitude which the Christian believer may reasonably take in relation to biblical criticism, there are two or three considerations which deserve to be specially insisted on. It is now assumed that the evidences of the supernatural mission of Jesus, and of his miracles, have produced the conviction which they warrant. It is obvious, in the first place, that so far as critical theories spring from the rejection of the supernatural, either as in itself impossible, or as having no function in connection with the religion of Christ, those theories have no weight. They are vitiated by the bias which lies at their root. They proceed upon an unscientific, because disproved, hypothesis that the religion of the Bible is a purely human product. When it is denied that a particular author wrote a certain book, or that it was written at a certain date, or that incidents related in it are true, or that predictions in it were made, and this denial depends simply on the *a priori* disbelief in the supernatural, it is of no value, and, to a Christian believer, will carry no weight. A theory respecting the matters just enumerated may be broached by one who disbelieves



in the resurrection of Jesus, and it may be sound, although it contravenes traditional opinion; but as far as that theory involves, as a presupposition and a *conditio sine qua non*, the denial or doubt of the resurrection, it is worthless. This criterion at once disposes of a mass of critical speculation about the literature of the Bible and its contents, which has no more solid foundation than the arbitrary assumption that a miracle is impossible, or that Christianity is not from God in any other sense than is true of Buddhism. Belief in Christianity as coming supernaturally from God does not justify one in dispensing with critical investigation, which, it need not be said, in order to be of any value, must be prosecuted thoroughly and in a candid and truth-loving spirit. Neither does it justify one in disregarding the canons of historical judgment, for the reason that particular features of a narrative are miraculous, and that miracles are possible, and have actually taken place at points along the line of divine revelation. An historical religion must verify itself, not only in general and as a whole, but also in its various parts, to the historical inquirer. That is to say, from the general truth, when once established, of the supernatural origin of the religion of the Bible, the strict verity of all the facts recorded in it, whether natural or supernatural, cannot at once be logically concluded. The tests of historical criticism must be applied as well to details as to the system as a whole.

Does it comport with the essentials of Christian belief to hold that deception may, in any instances, have been used in connection with the authorship of books of Sacred Scripture? For example, can it be admitted that what is known in ecclesiastical history as "pious fraud" had a part in the framing of scriptural books? For instance, is it consistent to allow that an author may have palmed off a book, historical or didactic, as the production of an honored man of an earlier time? In answer to these questions it is to be said at the outset that the supposition of an intended deception ought not to be allowed without satisfactory proof. It cannot be safely asserted that the author or authors of the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is referred to in Jude (ver. 14), and no part of which goes back farther than the age of the Maccabees, meant that readers should believe Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," to have been the writer. It may be in this, as no doubt it was in other cases, a mode of giving dignity and weight to lessons which the real author thought would be less efficacious if put forth in his



own name, but which he cast into this form with no intent to have them believed to be productions of the elder time. At the same time we should be cautious about assuming that a refinement of ethical feeling, equal to that which Christianity develops and demands, existed at all periods under the ancient dispensation. If there was, in general, an inferior stage in the development of conscience, it is not incredible that, even in holy men, there was a less delicate sense of truth and a less sensitive observance of the obligation of strict veracity. How far it may have pleased the Divine Being to allow this lack of moral discernment to affect the literary activity, as we know that it affected in other provinces the personal conduct and judgment, of holy and inspired men, we cannot *a priori* — at least, not with absolute confidence — determine. Everything must yield at last to the fair verdicts of a searching but reverent scholarship, which explores the field with the free and assured step of a Christian believer.

This brings us to the further remark that the authority of Christ and of the apostles, once established by convincing proofs, is decisive. Nothing that clashes with that authority, when its character and limits are rightly understood and defined, can stand. The evidence against any critical theory which, if admitted, would be in collision with the authority of Jesus and of the apostles, would so far forth impinge upon the faith of a Christian. But while this is to be borne in mind, it is equally necessary to avoid erroneous interpretations of their teaching, as far as it bears on literary and critical questions in connection with the Scriptures, their authorship and contents. A dogmatic utterance on such points, on the part of the Saviour or of the apostles, is not to be hastily inferred from references and citations which may not have been designed to carry this consequence. Not less essential is it to avoid an incautious, unverifiable extension of the teaching function which was claimed by Jesus for himself, and was promised by him to the apostles. The incarnation, in the deeper apprehension of it which enters into the evangelical theology of the present time, is perceived to involve limitations of the Saviour himself *in statu humiliationis*, which were formerly ignored. A stricter exegesis does not tolerate an artificial exposition, which was once in vogue, of passages which assert or indicate such a restriction, voluntary in its origin, during the period when the Lord was a man among men. It must be made clear that the Lord intended to declare

himself on points like those to which we have adverted, and that, directly or by implication, he meant to include them within that province which he knew to belong to him as a religious and ethical teacher, and in which he spoke as "one having authority."

If so much must be admitted by the most reverent disciple respecting the Great Teacher himself, surely not less must be said of the apostles. How far peculiarities of education, traditional and current impressions respecting the topics involved in biblical criticism, were left untouched, and continued to influence them, — not only while they were with Jesus, but also after the Spirit of inspiration had qualified them to go forth as heralds in his service, — can be settled by no *a priori* dictum, but only through processes of careful study. The sooner the wise words of Bishop Butler are laid to heart by Christian people, the better will it be for their own peace of mind, and for the cause of Christianity in its influence on doubters and in its conflict with foes. "The only question," says Butler, "concerning the truth of Christianity is whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and, concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a divine revelation should be."<sup>1</sup>

The apostles were empowered to understand and to expound the Gospel. The real purport and end of the mission, the death, the resurrection, of Jesus were opened up to their vision. His words, brought back to their remembrance, unfolded the hidden meaning with which they were laden. The relation of the anterior dispensation to the new era, the one being anticipatory of the other, they, if not instantly, at least gradually, saw into. Thus were they qualified to lead, and not to mislead, to teach, and to guide the Church. But not only were they men of like passions with ourselves, but in knowledge they had no part in omniscience. That which inspiration made clear to them was not made clear instantly and all at once. He who was not behind the chief of the apostles ranked himself among those who now "see through a glass, darkly," and waited for the full disclosure of truth which should supersede his dim and fragmentary perceptions.

There is an order of things to be believed. Before the scrip-

<sup>1</sup> See also the context, *Analogy*, p. ii. c. iii.

tures of the New Testament, Christ was preached and believed in : so now, prior to minute inquiries, and the exact formulation of doctrines, about the canon and inspiration, Christ is offered to faith. The grand outlines of the Gospel, both on the side of fact and of doctrine, stand out in bold relief. They are attested by historical proof. They are verified by evidences which are irrespective of many of the subjects of theological debate and of biblical criticism. The recognition of Christ in his character as the Son of God and Saviour of men is the prerequisite for engaging successfully in more remote and difficult inquiries respecting the literature and the history of revealed religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Relation of Biblical Teaching to Natural Science is treated in the Appendix, Note 22 ; The Relation of Biblical Criticism to Prophecy, in the Appendix, Note 23.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GRADUALNESS OF REVELATION

"FIRST the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." This picture Jesus himself drew of the foreseen expansion of his kingdom. The kingdom was to be "as if a man should cast seed upon the earth." He plants it and leaves it; he sleeps and rises, "night and day." Meantime the seed springs up and grows, "he knoweth not how." It goes through, one after another, the stages of development up to the ripeness of the fruit. A parable, it need scarcely be said, is framed to illustrate one point, and is not to be pressed beyond the intended scope. As rain and sunshine are required for the growth of wheat, we are taught elsewhere that divine influences are needful, and are never disconnected from the operation of the truth in the minds of men. There is enough complementary teaching of Jesus to preclude any mistake or one-sided view in this direction. Yet the parable shows the confidence of Jesus in the perpetuity and progress of his kingdom. There resides in it, so he declared, a self-preserving, self-developing life. The seed, once planted, might be left with entire unconcern as to its growth. In these days, when "development" is a word on every tongue, we are often told that the conception of nature and natural law is foreign to the Scriptures. No assertion could be more mistaken. Even on the first page of the Bible, although the design there is to set in the foreground the creative agency of God, we read that the earth was bidden to bring forth the grass, the herb, and the fruit-tree, each yielding, "after his kind," "whose seed is in itself." In the parable of Jesus of which we are speaking it is said that "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," that is, to transfer the Greek term into English, "automatically." The epithet is chosen which denotes most precisely a self-acting, spontaneous energy, inherent in the seed which Jesus, through his discourses, his acts of mercy and power, and his patience unto death, was sowing in the world. This grand prophetic declaration,

uttered in a figure so simple and beautiful, in the ears of a little company of Galileans, was to be wonderfully verified in the coming ages of Christian history.

It is not, however, the progress of Christianity since it was fully introduced by Christ and the apostles that we have now to consider. The development of the understanding of Christianity on the side of doctrine and of ethics, the advance to a more and more just and enlightened comprehension of the Christian religion, the unveiling of the riches of meaning involved in it, is a fascinating theme. But all this belongs under the head of the *interpretation* of Christianity, that term being used in a broad sense. The religion of the Gospel means vastly more to-day than it was ever perceived to mean before. This enlarged meaning, however, is not annexed to it or carried into it, but legitimately educed from it, through the ever widening perceptions of Christian men whom the Spirit of God illuminates. The starry heavens are now what they were of old; there is no enlargement of the stellar universe except that which comes through the increased power and use of the telescope. The globe on which we dwell to-day is the same that it was twenty centuries ago. Yet during the past ages there has been a progressive advance in astronomical and geographical discovery. No one commits the blunder of confounding discovery with creation.

What we have to speak of now is development and progress in the contents of Revelation itself, in the interval between its remotest beginnings and the epoch when the apostles finally handed it over in its ripe, consummated form to the Church, to be thereafter promulgated throughout the world. Of divine revelation itself the saying is likewise true, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The fact that Revelation was progressive, that it went forward like the advance from dawn to noonday, may suggest the hasty, unwarranted conclusion that it was a natural process merely. Some will be quick to leap to this rash inference. As regards natural religion, the fact that creation is found to have been progressive, that unsuspected links unite its consecutive stages, that the tendency of science is to unveil a certain continuity in nature, leads the short-sighted to ignore the supernatural altogether. They imagine that there is no need to call in God to explain nature except where breaks are met in the chain of mechanical causation. It is enough, they imagine, to be



able to trace back the planetary system to a fiery vapor preceding it, as if the existence, or the order, or the beauty, of the astro-nomic system were thereby explained. If it be true that the plants in their multiplied species "or kinds" spring out of a few primitive germs, or out of only one, the evidence of forethought and will-power in the organization of the vegetable kingdom is not in the least weakened. Nor would it be effaced if the spontaneous generation of the living from the lifeless were an ascertained fact of science. It is another fruit of that same unreflecting tendency to dispense with God where there is observed an orderly progress of phenomena, which leads to the ignoring or denial of the supernatural in connection with the gradually developing religion of redemption. The critical researches of the time disclose bonds of connection between successive stages of religious and moral teaching in the sacred volume. As in geology, there is less need than was formerly thought to fall back on the supposition of catastrophes along the path. The rudiments of what once seemed an utterly new form or phase of doctrine are detected at a point farther back. Behind the most impressive inculcations of truth are found the more or less unshapen materials out of which they were framed. The statue is followed back through the different sets of workmen to the quarry where the marble was hewn out of its bed. Before the Lord's Prayer was given by the Master, some of the petitions contained in it had lain dispersed, like grains of gold, in the arid waste of rabbinical teaching. The first effect on a novice in literary studies of looking behind Shakespeare's plays to the tales out of which they were woven, is to lessen in some slight degree his previous impression of the poet's originality. In a much greater degree is this effect produced by a first glance at the spoils of the past which Milton gathered — from Homer, the Greek tragedians, Dante — and incorporated into his poems. That revealed religion *is* revealed, and is not the product of human genius, despite the gradual unfolding of that religion and the coherence of its parts, becomes increasingly evident the more thoroughly its characteristics are appreciated. Its unique character finds no satisfactory explanation in the native tendencies of the Semitic race. History belies such a naturalistic solution, of which Renan is one of the later advocates. This can be said while it is conceded that there were, no doubt, qualities in the Hebrew people which caused them to be selected as the recipi-

ents of revelation, and as witnesses for God to the rest of mankind. When we contemplate the true religion in its long, continuous advance upward to its culmination in the Gospel of Christ; when we survey this entire course of history as a connected whole, we are struck with the conviction of supernatural agency and authorship. When the outcome appears at the end in Jesus Christ and his work, light is thrown back on the divine ordering of the long series of antecedent steps. The accompaniment of miracle is a crowning token, reënforcing all other proofs of the supernatural, and confirming faith by an argument to the senses.

In glancing at the historic process of revelation, as that is disclosed by the scriptural documents, there is one transition which none can overlook. It is the contrast, on which the apostle Paul builds so much, between law and gospel, the old covenant and the new. It is true that the Old Testament is not wanting in proclamations of the merciful character of God. It was a part of the life and soul of the books of prophecy. The apostle Paul himself insists that the Old Testament religion was, in its very foundation, a religion of promise, and that the function of the law was to fill an intermediate space and to do a subsidiary office, prior to the realization of the promise. His doctrine is, moreover, that even the Gospel contains a new disclosure of God's righteousness, which was made necessary by his having passed over human sins in the period of comparative ignorance. The atonement prevents the misconstruction which the divine forbearance in dealing with law-breakers in the earlier times might occasion. Still, the older revelation of God was comparatively a manifestation designed to impress on those to whom it was made his justice and unsparing abhorrence of transgression. Only as far as ill-desert is felt can pardon be either given or received. An education of conscience must precede a dispensation of grace. The later revelation was one of forgiving love. The superiority of Christianity to the Old Testament religion is the subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Its author will show that Christ is the "mediator of a better covenant" — a covenant with "better promises." "For," he pointedly remarks, "if that first covenant had been faultless," there would have been no occasion and no room for the second. The world-embracing compass of God's love, its inclusion of the Gentile races, was one of the prime elements in

the Gospel. This was the "mystery" which had been hidden from "ages and generations." The ordinary meaning of the term "mystery" in the New Testament writings is not something which is still unknown or inscrutable, but something which had before been concealed from human knowledge, but had now been brought to light. And the term is specially applied to the purpose of God to show mercy to the world of mankind—a purpose which had been partially concealed from men, or at best but obscurely divined. That in the older dispensation rules were in the foreground; in the later, principles, is a more comprehensive statement of the difference.

What precisely was the conception of God which was entertained in the earliest periods of Hebrew history is a subject of debate. There are questions which will be settled variously, according to the different views which are adopted respecting the date and relative authority of the documents. That the process of expelling the vestiges of polytheism and image-worship from the practices of the Israelitish people was accomplished slowly, is sufficiently clear. The cult of household images did not at once disappear. The assumption, involved in language uttered by the heathen, that the gods of other nations than Israel are real beings and exercise power, although it may be less than the power of Israel's God, of itself determines nothing as to the doctrine of Israel's own accredited teachers. But Jethro, although a Midianite prince, was the father-in-law of Moses, and we find him saying, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." Jephthah says to a Moabite king: "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God hath dispossessed from before us, them will we possess." Even Solomon wavered in his beliefs on this subject. Side by side with the altars of Jehovah he built altars to foreign gods. Even in the early Church the idea prevailed that the deities of the heathen were demons—really existing, but evil and inferior in power. It would be natural for the half-enlightened Hebrews to imagine that there was some sort of territorial limit to the jurisdiction of the God whom they worshipped. An indistinct idea of this kind is at least a natural explanation of the story of the attempted flight of the prophet Jonah to Tarshish, which lay on the western border of the Mediterranean. There is a curious disclosure of a natural feeling in the fact recorded, without censure or comment of any

sort, of Naaman, the Syrian captain. He craved permission to take into Syria two mules' burden of earth, — the sacred soil of Israel, — that upon it he might offer sacrifice to Jehovah. Scholars of high repute consider the earliest belief of the descendants of Abraham to have fallen short of a positive monotheism, and to have been rather a monolatry, — the worship of one God to the exclusion of all other worship, but without an explicit disbelief in the existence of other divinities who have respectively their own earthly realms to govern. Then the progress of faith would include, first, the idea of the God of Israel as more powerful than all other deities ; and then, later, the ascription to him of almightiness, and the distinct conviction that all other gods are fictitious beings. The path from a more narrow conception of God to a pure and absolute monotheism involved a deepening ethical idea of the attributes of Israel's God. Wellhausen writes, "Jehovah became the God of Justice and Right ; as God of Justice and Right he came to be thought of as the highest, and at last as the only, power in heaven and earth." The reader of statements of this kind should bear in mind that we are in a field where prepossession and speculative theorizing play a great part. If Jehovah, at the outset, was regarded as simply the tribal god, the sovereign protector of that one people, while the other nations were imagined to have each its own guardian divinity, the expansion of this primitive notion into the pure and lofty conception of the only true and living God, the world's creator and ruler, which is presented in soul-stirring language by the most ancient prophets, is a marvel. The transformation is really insoluble on any naturalistic theory. Even on the supposition that there was this gradual uplifting of religion from the low plane on which all pagan nations stood, and that the notion of a mere local divinity, of limited control, gave way to the majestic conception of one Lord of heaven and earth, the maker of all things, the ruler of nations, the universal sovereign, — no conclusion would be so reasonable as that God Almighty took this method of gradually disclosing his being and attributes to that portion of the human race from whom, as from a centre, the light of the true faith was eventually to radiate to the rest of mankind.

Neither the Hebrew people generally nor their leaders were metaphysicians. In the earlier ages especially, they entered into no analytic discrimination of matter and spirit. They pictured



to themselves the varied activities of God, of whose personality they had the most vivid idea, in phrases descriptive of the feelings and actions of human beings. It is remarkable that the anthropomorphism of the scriptural writers is predominantly in what is related of Jehovah, the name of God in his relation to the chosen people, — the Deity (Elohim) as the God of Revelation. At length, by explicit statute, all visible representations of God were forbidden as profane. In Deuteronomy, as in Exodus, images of him are prohibited. "Ye saw no manner of form on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb" (Deut. iv. 15). The prophets guarded against all material associations attaching to the notion of the Supreme Being. A distinct step in this direction is to be observed in a passage in Isaiah, where it is said, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit" (Is. xxxi. 3). Yet it is not definitely said in the Old Testament that God *is* a spirit. This was the declaration of Jesus to the woman of Samaria.

The universal Providence of God is a cardinal element in Christian theism. Nothing is independent of him. There is no province exempt from his control, where rival agencies hold sway and thwart his designs. We can easily understand why, in the early stages of revelation, all emphasis should be laid on the sovereign power of God, and why a clear separation of his direct efficiency from his permissive act should be reserved for a later day. It was always taught, indeed, and holds true for all time, that according to a law of habit, of which the Creator of the soul is the author and sustainer, sin engenders further sin. A self-propagating power inheres in transgression. In numberless examples it is observed that sin is thus the penalty of sin. It is true now, as it was always true, that a loss of moral discernment and a fixedness of perverse inclination are an ordained effect of persistent evil-doing. The law which entails this result is but another name for a divine operation. Hence it is a false and superficial theology which will find no place for "judicial blindness" and for a "hardening of heart" that deserves to be called a judgment of God. So far the scriptures of the New Testament are in full accord with the scriptures of the Old. But there are certain forms of representation which, in the introductory periods of Revelation, go beyond these statements, and ascribe to God a positive and immediate agency in the production of moral evil. Some-



times the hardening of the heart is spoken of as if it were the end which is directly aimed at. Such passages, taken by themselves, would warrant the harshest doctrine of reprobation which hyper-Calvinism has ever broached. The proper treatment of such passages is not — certainly not in all cases — to pronounce them hyperboles. It is not through unnatural devices of interpretation that we are to rid ourselves of the difficulty which passages of this nature occasion. The reference of them to a fervid rhetoric — in some instances, to say the least — may not be the right solution. Why may we not see in them that vivid idea of God's limitless power and providence which has not yet arrived at the point, or felt the need, of qualifying the conception by theological discriminations? If it be asked how it was possible to reconcile the perception of the ill-desert of sin with the ascription of it to God's causal agency, the answer is that the question of their consistency was not thought of. Reflection was required before their inconsistency could attract attention, and the need of removing it be felt. In more than one philosophical system — for example, in Stoicism — there is found an earnest ethical feeling, which condemns wrong action, side by side with a metaphysical theory as to the origin of moral evil which logically clashes with such an abhorrence of it. The two judgments do not jostle each other, because they are not brought together in the thoughts of those who entertain them. Where there is more reflection in the matter, as in Spinoza and his followers, it is still possible to keep up a degree of moral disapproval along with a theory which really ought to banish it as absurd. In the ancient scriptures, and occasionally in the New Testament, especially in passages cited from the Old, the evil-doing and perdition of classes of men, their misunderstanding and perversion of the truth, are set forth as ends in themselves. Being involved in the circle of occurrences which are comprised in the general scheme of Providence, they are no surprise to him who carries it forward. They were foreseen and taken into the account from the beginning. It was arranged that they should be overruled and made the occasion of good. Their relation to Providence is emphasized in speaking of them as being directly aimed at and pursued on their own account, or for the sake of an ulterior benefit. As we follow down the progress of Revelation, we see that needful distinctions are more frequently made and more carefully insisted on. In the second

book of Samuel (xxiv. 1) it is said that God "moved" David against Israel, with whom he was displeased, and bade him go and number the people. The impulse or resolution of David, on account of which he was subsequently struck with compunction, is there said to have emanated directly from God himself. But in the later history (1 Chron. xxi. 1), in the record of the same transaction, we read that it was Satan who "provoked David to number Israel." The earlier writer does not hesitate to describe God's providential act as if it were the direct object of his preference, — an explicit injunction; and the fact of David's repentance for doing the act does not present to the writer's mind any difficulty. The chronicler, from a later point of view, sets forth the act of David in such a way as to exclude, if not to contradict, the supposition that it was God who prompted it.

The gradualness of the disclosure of the merciful character of God is one of the most obvious features of Revelation. One part of this disclosure pertains to the heathen, and to the light in which they are regarded. It was natural that the contempt and loathing which idolatry and the abominations of paganism excited in the heart of the pious Israelite — feelings which the Mosaic revelation developed and stimulated — should be felt towards heathen worshippers themselves. The hatred thus begotten might awaken an implacable desire that vengeance should fall upon them. An impressive rebuke of this unmerciful sentiment, and what is really a distinct advance in the inculcation of an opposite feeling, is found in the book of Jonah. There are reasons which have availed to satisfy critics as learned and impartial as Bleek, who are influenced by no prejudice against miracles as such, that this remarkable book was originally meant to be an apologue, — an imaginative story, linked to the name of an historical person, a prophet of an earlier date, — and was composed in order to inculcate the lesson with which the narrative concludes. One thing brought out by the experience of Jonah is that God's mercy is so great that even an explicit threat of dire calamities may be left unfulfilled, in case there intervene repentance on the part of those against whom it was directed. The prophet, who was exasperated at the sparing of the Ninevites, was taught how narrow and cruel his ideas were, by the symbol of the gourd, "which came up in a night, and perished in a night." He was incensed on account of the withering of the gourd which had shielded his head from the

sun. The Lord referred to Jonah's having had pity on the gourd, and said, "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand ; and also much cattle?" This humane utterance, in which pity is expressed even for dumb brutes, is memorable for being an important landmark in Scripture, since it marks a widened view of God's compassion. To illustrate this truth the narrative was written, and toward it as onward to a goal it steadily moves. It is a mistake to think that ill-will toward heathen nations pervades the Old Testament. When they were full of animosity against the kingdom of God and determined to destroy it, anger burned fiercely against them, and prayers went up for their defeat and destruction. Very different was the feeling with which Cyrus and the Persians were regarded. We find that the conversion of the heathen nations becomes an object of devout aspiration. The sublime prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, for the "stranger" and "the peoples of the earth," is only one of the passages in which this feeling is poured out. In Micah, who was not the latest of the prophets, we find the prediction that unto the mountain of the Lord the heathen peoples will flow, will ask to be taught of his ways, and will promise to "walk in his paths" (Micah iv. 1-4). An idea of the kingdom at once so comprehensive and so spiritual was the fruit of time and progress.

The truth of a righteous moral government over the world pervades Revelation from the beginning. Obedience to law will not fail of its due reward ; guilt will be punished in a just measure. But under the Old Testament system, nearly to its close, the theatre of reward and penalty was confined to this world. The horizon was practically bounded by the limits of the earthly life. It was here, on earth, that well-doing was to secure the appropriate blessing, and sin to encounter its meet retribution. The Israelite, like other men of antiquity, was wrapped up in the state. He felt that his weal or woe hinged on the fortunes of the community in whose well-being his affections were, in a degree beyond our modern experience, absorbed. The prophets never ceased to thunder forth the proclamation that the fate of the community would be surely, in the providence of God, determined by its fidelity or its disloyalty to its moral and religious obligations. If they deserted God, he would forsake them. The people were to

be rewarded or punished, blessed or cursed, as a body. And so in reality their experience proved. Moreover, as regards the single family and the individual, the tendencies of righteous action, under the laws of Providence, were then, as always, on the whole favorable to the upright in heart. The arrangements of Providence were in their favor. But in process of time it became more and more painfully evident that this rule was not without numerous exceptions. The righteous man was not uniformly prospered. He might be poor, he might be oppressed, he might be condemned to endure physical torture, he might perish in the midst of his days. On the other hand, the wicked man was often seen to thrive. His wealth increased. He grew in power and influence. His life was prolonged. How could the justice of God be defended? How could the allotments of Providence — this disharmony between character and earthly fortune — be vindicated? This problem became the more anxious and perplexing as the minds of men grew to be more observant and reflective. How to explain the lack of correspondence between the condition and the deserts of the individual? This problem is the groundwork of the book of Job. A righteous man is overwhelmed by calamities one after another. His lot is to himself a dark and terrible mystery. But his consolers, when they break silence, solve it in the only way known to their theology. Such exceptional suffering implies an exceptional amount of guilt. Job must have been a flagrant transgressor. Of this fact his dismal situation is proof positive. The wrath of Jehovah is upon him. Conscious of the injustice of the allegation brought against him, yet unable to confute the logic of it, Job can do nothing but break out in loud complaints extorted by his anguish and the bewilderment into which he is thrown. He cannot see any equity in the lot which has befallen him. His outcries give vent to a pessimistic view of the world and of the divine management of it. Another interlocutor brings forward the inscrutable character of God's doings. What more vain and arrogant than for so weak and helpless a creature as man to pretend to sound the unfathomable counsels of the Almighty, or to sit in judgment on his ordinances? This, of course, is a rebuke, but contains no satisfactory answer to the questions which the distress of Job wrings from him. But the real answer is given. Afflictions may have other ends than to punish. They may be trials of the righteousness of a servant of God. They are a test



to decide whether it springs out of a mercenary motive. Hence it is not to be inferred that his sufferings are the measure of his ill-desert. Thus a distinct advance is made in the theodicy. New vistas are opened. Pain has other designs and uses besides the retributive function. Yet at the end Job's possessions and his earthly prosperity are restored to him. The feeling that even here on earth there must be, sooner or later, an equalizing of character and fortune, is not wholly given up.

External evidence is of no service in determining the date of the book of Job. Internal evidence, especially the character of its themes and reasonings, indicate that it could not have been written earlier than when the monarchy was verging on its downfall. Another book, Ecclesiastes, belongs to a period when doubt and speculation had made a much further advance. It may belong to the closing days of the Persian, or the early days of the Greek, dominion. It is the composition of a keen-sighted observer of human life in its multiform aspects and, it would seem, with a large personal experience of its necessities. In the course of a stream of sceptical and pessimistic utterances on human existence as a scene of inevitable disappointment, with no hope of a hereafter, we find interjected, here and there, the recognition of God and his government. We reach at the close a solemn reminder of the righteous order under his sway and of duty as the sum of human wisdom. To some of the critics this conclusion appears to be the supplement of another writer or editor, but as Driver suggests, it may quite as probably have sprung from the sense of the need on the part of the author, of such a conclusion, to counteract the impression of the preceding portions of his work. The species of doubt, leading to an almost cynical tone, which characterize it, indicate that speculation and even rationalizing were coming in. The book has perplexed alike ancient Jews and modern Christian theologians and critics. It was not until after centuries that at the Jewish council of Jamnia (about 90 A.D.) its admission to the Canon of the Old Testament was sanctioned. It is one of the books which compel the perception of different degrees of inspiration in the scriptures. Its admission into the canon is not to be regretted. It has a part in the Old Testament documents in showing us the successive phases of the Hebrew religious consciousness in its age-long development under the tutelage of Providence and the unerring light upon things not seen, imparted by the spirit of God.



Besides the lesson conveyed in the book of Job, it was revealed then to the religious mind that suffering, besides being inflicted as the wages of sin, might also be sent to put to the test the steadfastness of the sufferer's loyalty to God, to prove the unselfishness of piety (by showing that it might survive the loss of all personal advantages resulting from it), and to fortify the soul in its principle of obedience and trust. But relief from perplexity in view of the calamities of the righteous came from another source. This was the perception of the vicarious character of the righteous man's affliction. This idea emerges to view in a distinct form in the great prophets. The pious portion of Israel, the kernel of the people, suffer not for their own sake, but on account of the sins of the nation, and as a means of saving it from deserved penalties and from utter destruction. This view is brought out by Isaiah in his description of the servant of Jehovah. The conception is gradually narrowed from Israel as a whole, or the select portion of Israel, and becomes more concrete; so that in the fifty-third chapter the sufferer appears to take on the distinct character of an individual, the Messianic deliverer. It is declared that the popular judgment respecting the sufferer, which attributes to him personal guilt, and sees in his lot the frown of God, is mistaken. Penalties are laid on him, he is taking on himself penalties which not he, but others, deserve to bear. How this principle of vicarious service is illustrated in the life and death of Jesus, and how abundantly it is set forth in the New Testament, it is needless to say. The men whose blood Pilate had mingled with their own sacrifices were not sinners above all the Galileans. The eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell were not offenders above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem. Who had sinned, the blind man or his parents, that he was born blind? His blindness, Jesus replied, was not a penalty for the sin of either. This problem of the distribution here on earth of suffering in discordance with desert, of which we are speaking, had new light shed upon it by the gradually developing faith in the future life; but of this point I will speak further on. In general, the contrast between the general tenor of Old Testament descriptions of the reward of the righteous, and of the New Testament declarations on the same theme, is very marked. In the Old Testament it is riches, numerous children, safety of person and of property, which are so often assured to the righteous. The words

of Jesus are, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Yet the essential character of God, the eternal principle of justice that will somehow and somewhere be carried out in the government of the world, is at the root alike in both dispensations.

He who would appreciate the progress of Revelation has only need to compare the silence as to a hereafter and the gloom that encompasses the grave — characteristic features of ancient Scripture — with the definite assurances and the triumphant hopes which are scattered over the pages of the New Testament. On this subject we can trace the advance from the night to the brightening dawn, and from the dawn to midday. The hopes and aspirations of the ancient Israelites were bounded by the limits of the present life. Their joys and sorrows were here; here, as we have seen, were their rewards and punishments. It is true they did not positively believe that their being was utterly extinguished at death. On the contrary, they found it impossible so to think. There was some kind of continuance of their being, vague and shadowy though it was. When it is said of the worthies of old that they died and were "gathered to their fathers," it is not to their burial — certainly not to their burial alone — that the phrase points. It was used of those who died far away from their kindred. A continued subsistence of some sort is implied in it. Necromancy was a practice which was forbidden by law; and the need of such a law proves that the belief and custom prohibited by it had taken root. The story of the appearance of Samuel, and the occupation of the witch of Endor, show at least a popular notion that the dead could be summoned back to life. Sheol, the Hades of the Israelites, was thought of as a dark, subterranean abode, a land of shades, where existence was almost too dim to be denominated life. There was nothing in this unsubstantial mode of being to kindle hope, or to excite any other emotion than that of dread. In the poetical books, Sheol is personified and depicted as full of greed, opening her mouth "without measure," and swallowing up all the pomp and glory of man. In a splendid passage of Isaiah, Sheol is represented as disturbed by the approach within her gloomy domain of the once mighty king of Babylon, and as stirring up the shades, the dead monarchs, to meet him. They exult over his downfall and death, crying, "Is this the man who made the earth to tremble, who made kingdoms to quake, who made the world as a wilderness, and broke down

the cities thereof?" But this is only a highly figurative delineation of the humiliating fall and death of the arrogant, dreaded sovereign. It is not until we have passed beyond the earlier writings of the Old Testament that we meet, here and there, with cheerful and even confident expressions of hope in relation to the life beyond death. In the later Psalms there is an occasional utterance in this vein. The sense of the soul's communion with God is so uplifting as to forbid the idea that it can be broken by death. Jesus refers to the Old Testament declaration that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as a sufficient warrant for the belief in the continued immortal life of those who stood in this near, exalted relation to the Eternal One. What other — at least what higher — evidence of immortality is there than is derived from the worth of the soul; and what indication of its worth is to be compared with its capacity to enter into living fellowship with God? How can a being who is admitted to this fellowship be left to perish, to exist no more?

Besides this connection of faith in a future life with the relation of the righteous and believing soul to God, the demand for another state of being to rectify inequalities here arose by degrees in religious minds. The strange allotment of good and evil, whereby the good man, and not the bad man, was often seen to be the sufferer, and the holy were found to be maligned and the victims of oppression, led to the expectation of a life beyond, where this confusion would be cleared up and an adjustment be made according to merit. The moral argument, which Kant, and others before and since, have presented as the ground for believing in a future state, was a revelation from God to the Hebrew mind, and not the less so because this belief stood connected with experiences and perceptions that went before. There is a familiar passage in the book of Job in which the hope of a reawakening from death is perhaps expressed. It is the passage beginning, "I know that my Redeemer" — or Vindicator — "liveth." The confessions of hopelessness in earlier portions of the book, the impassioned assertions that there is nothing to be looked for beyond death, are to be counted in favor of the other interpretation, according to which Job expected that his vindication would occur prior to his actual dissolution. On the contrary, however, it is not improbable that the foresight of an actual reawakening to life is represented as having flashed upon his mind, displacing the former despondency.

Certain it is that distinct assertions of a resurrection appear, here and there, in the later Scriptures. For in the biblical theology it is the deliverance of the whole man, body as well as soul, which in process of time comes to be the established belief. It is closely associated with the conviction that in the triumph and blessedness of the kingdom the departed saints are not to be deprived of a share. It was not a belief derived from the Persians, but was indigenous among the Hebrews, — an integral part of revelation, — however it may have been encouraged and stimulated by contact with Persian tenets. Not to refer to statements, relative to a resurrection, of a symbolical character, — such as the vision of dry bones in Ezekiel, — we find in the twenty-sixth chapter of Isaiah a passage which is explicit, and, as it would seem, is to be taken literally. In the Revised Version the passage reads, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise." There is a critical question, it should be stated, as to the date of the chapter in which these words occur. In the Psalms there are not wholly wanting passages of a like purport. In the book of Daniel, which belongs, certainly in its present compass, to the Maccabean period, the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked Israelites is very definitely predicted. As is well known, the resurrection was an accepted doctrine of orthodox Jews in the period following that covered by the canonical books. In the New Testament, immortality, and with it the resurrection, stands in the foreground. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus there comes a new illumination, a signal disclosure of God's purpose of grace and of the blessed import of eternal life; so that death is said to be "abolished," and life and incorruption "brought to light" (2 Tim. i. 10).

Other illustrations, within the sphere of religion as distinguished from ethics, of the gradual progress of Revelation, will occur to every student of the Bible. One of these we may find in the development of the idea of sacrifice. Among ancient peoples generally, the approach to a superior — a human lord — was by supplications and gifts. In the same way it was natural to approach the divinity, and come into immediate intercourse with him. As far as a special character belonged to Hebrew sacrifices, it was owing to the higher conceptions of God which pertained to the religion of Israel, and to the express ordinances and regulations under which all religious observances were placed. But the Old Testament sacrifices were gifts to God, varying in their specific import by



the particular feelings to be expressed and the particular benefits to be sought. A surrender was made of something precious, signifying self-devotion to Jehovah on the part of him who brought the offering. When there was a rupture of relations by reason of sin, the sacrifice took on a modified significance, and peculiar experiences of feeling were evoked in connection with it. In the age of the prophets, the spiritual elements of religion are brought into the foreground, and in comparison with them, and in case they are absent, the worthlessness of all ceremonial practices is loudly proclaimed. This elevated view comes out in the fifty-first Psalm, where God is said not to delight in sacrifice, but to crave as an offering "a broken and a contrite heart." The sacrifices of the ritual system might avail to take away the pain of self-reproach for a time, and with reference to particular transgressions. But the insufficiency of offerings of this nature became increasingly evident. At last the essential idea of sacrifice was realized and exhibited by him who could say of himself, "Lo, I am come to do thy will" (Heb. x. 9). Here was no outward gift, but himself—his own life—that was brought, in a willing surrender, to the Father. Here was the climax of self-denial, or devotion to the Father's will and appointment. "He loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph. v. 2). The self-surrender of the Christian, even of his body, to God, the dedication of himself to God, is styled by the apostle Paul our "reasonable," or spiritual, "service," in contrast with the external and visible sacrifices of the old ritual (Rom. xii. 1).

Another illustration still is presented in the Messianic idea, as that idea is gradually unfolded and by degrees transfigured in the Old Testament, and carried to perfection in the New. Messianic prophecy passes forward from its immature, germinant state in the earlier times, until it appears in the lofty and spiritual forms in which it blossoms out in later ages. The Old Testament community was itself prophetic. Everything in it pointed to the future. The very fact that God had entered into a direct relation to this one people carried in it the promise of victory and universality. But what should be the characteristic features of the coming day,—this was a matter on which light must be shed gradually. Only as the community grew and advanced could it be taught to comprehend itself and forecast the future. A progress or growth of prophecy was therefore a necessary incident. Even inspired men



could never be transported to a distant age. There were always limits in the prophetic anticipation, colors in the picture caught from the scenery and atmosphere in the midst of which the prophet lived and wrote. In the blessing recorded of Jacob, in his saying that the sceptre should not depart from Judah; in those exultant prophecies of the dominion that would be gained by the kingdom of David and his successors, which we meet with in the Psalms; in the foresight, granted to the great prophets of Israel, of an approaching era of universal righteousness and peace; in the portrait, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, of the suffering servant of Jehovah, — we find different phases of Messianic prediction. In that chapter of the “evangelical prophet” the anticipation comes nearest to the ideal in certain essential features. But for the ideal purified from all imperfections of time and place and finite apprehension we must look to the character of the Messiah himself, and to the work actually achieved by him.

When we leave theology for the domain of ethics, the progressive character of Revelation is capable of abundant illustration. The Sermon on the Mount has for its theme that fulfilment of law, that unfolding of its inner aim and essence, which Christ declared to be one end of his mission. Morality is followed down to its roots in the inmost dispositions of the heart. The precepts of Jesus are a protest against the Pharisaical glosses which tradition had attached to Old Testament injunctions. It is “the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees” which is pointedly condemned. It is still a controverted question, however, whether the reference to what had been said by or to “them of old time” was intended to include Old Testament legislation itself, as well as the perverse, arbitrary interpretations which had been attached to it by its theological expounders. Plainly the injunction of Jesus to love the enemy as well as the neighbor goes beyond the directions in Leviticus (xix. 17, 18): “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. . . . Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Here nothing is said of any except the “neighbor.” The prohibition is limited to the treatment of national kinsmen. That the general obligation to the exercise of good-will toward wrong-doers and foes, wherever they may be, and to the cultivation of a forgiving temper toward all men, finds in the Gospel an unprecedented expansion and emphasis, is evi-

dent to all readers of the New Testament. A supplication for the pardon of enemies forms a part of the Lord's Prayer. The hope of personal forgiveness is denied to those who are themselves unforgiving. The example of Jesus, and the pardon offered to the most unworthy through him, are a new and potent incentive to the exercise of a forgiving temper.

A glance at the ideals of ethical worth in the early ages of Israel is enough to show how sharply they contrast with the laws of Christ and the type of character required and exemplified in the New Testament. It was once said by an eminent divine that the patriarchs, were they living now, would be in the penitentiary. Polygamy and other practices, the rightfulness of which nobody then disputed, the wrongfulness of which nobody then discerned, are related of them, and related without any expression of disapproval. Whoever has not learned that practical morality, the ramifications of a righteous principle in conduct, is a gradual growth, and that even now, after the generic principles of duty have been set forth in the Gospel, and a luminous example of the spirit in which one should live has been afforded in the life of Jesus, the perception of the demands of morality advances from stage to stage of progress, is incompetent to take the seat of judgment upon men of remote ages. A while ago a letter of Washington was published, in which directions are given for the transportation to the West Indies and sale there of a refractory negro who had given him trouble. The act was not at variance with the best morality of the time. The letter is one that deserves to cast no shade on the spotless reputation of its author. Yet a like act, if done to-day, would excite almost universal reprobation. To revile the worthies of Old Testament times as if they lacked the vital principle of unselfish loyalty to God and to right, as they understood it, is not less irrational than to deride the habitations which they constructed, or the farming-tools which they used to till the ground. It is not the less imperatively required of us, however, to recognize the wide interval that separates the ancient conceptions of morality from those of the Gospel. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, entered heart and soul into the cause of Israel in the mortal struggle with the Canaanites. In lending aid to the cause which she espoused she did an act of atrocious cruelty and treachery. She enticed Sisera into her tent, and when he was sleeping, drove a tent-pin through his head. Yet for her deed

she is lauded in the song of Deborah the prophetess (Judges v.), "Blessed above women shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite!" Almost the same words were addressed to the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 42), "Blessed art thou among women!" What an infinite contrast between the two women to whom this lofty distinction is awarded! Nothing is better fitted to force on us the perception of the gradualness and the continuity of the unfolding of morality in the scriptures.

We meet in the Psalms with imprecations which are not consonant with the spirit of the Gospel; they belong on a lower plane of ethical feeling. It is one thing to experience a satisfaction in the just punishment of crime. It is accordant with Christianity to regard with conscientious abhorrence iniquity, whether we ourselves or other men are the sufferers by it. Indifference to base conduct, be the root of this state of mind a dulness of the moral sense or false sentiment, is, to say the least, not less repulsive, and may be more demoralizing, than the fires of resentment which nothing but fierce retaliation can quench. But the spirit of revenge is unchristian. Christianity teaches us to distinguish between the offence and the offender: the one we are to hate; the other we are forbidden to hate. Moreover, Christianity never loses sight of the possibility of reformation in the case of wrongdoers. The Christian considers what an individual might be, not merely what he now is. The benevolent feeling, therefore, is not allowed to be paralyzed by the moral hatred which evil conduct naturally and properly evokes. As regards personal resentment, the Christian disciple is cautioned never to forget his own ill-desert and need of pardon from God, and the great boon of forgiveness, in the reception of which the Christian life begins. These qualifications and correctives of passion were comparatively wanting in the earlier dispensation.

Many expressions of wrath in the Old Testament are directed against the enemies of God and of his kingdom, by whom Israel was attacked or threatened. They are outbursts of a righteous indignation, and as such merit respect, even though an alloy of personal vindictiveness may unhappily mingle in them. It was no fault to be incensed against impious and cruel assailants of all that was precious to a patriot and to a reverent worshipper of Jehovah. It is impossible, however, to refer all the imprecations in the Psalms to a feeling of the authors in relation to such enemies of

God and of his kingdom. No devices of interpretation can harmonize with the precepts of Christ such expressions as are found in the 109th Psalm: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg. . . . Let the extortioner catch all that he hath. . . . Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children." The wrath of the author of this lyric against the cruel and insolent one who "persecuted the poor and needy man, and the broken in heart, to slay them," it is fair to assume was merited. The sense of justice and the holy anger at the root of these anathemas are in themselves right. They are the result of a divine education. But they take the form of revenge,—a kind of wild justice, as Lord Bacon calls it. The identification of the family with its head is one of "the ruling ideas" of antiquity. It appears often in the methods of retribution which were in vogue in the Old Testament ages. It gave way partly and by degrees, under that progressive enlightenment from above through which individual responsibility became more distinctly felt and acknowledged, both in judicial proceedings and in private life. The distinctive spirit of the Gospel is shown in the rebuke of Jesus when the disciples proposed to call down fire from heaven to destroy the inimical Samaritans (Luke ix. 55). It is most impressively seen in his prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34).

It is the characteristic of Old Testament laws and precepts that in them bounds are set to evils, the attempt immediately to extirpate which would have proved abortive. Something more than this must be said. There was lacking a full perception of the moral ideal. In the Old Testament expositions of duty, as we have already seen, there is an approach toward that radical treatment of moral evils which signalizes the Christian system. An additional example of this feature of the preparatory stage of revelation may be found in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs. There "Lemuel," the name of a king, or a name applied to one of the kings, is apostrophized. He is exhorted to practise chastity and temperance: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." What better counsel could be given? The judge on the bench must have a clear head. But the counsellor, in order

to strengthen his admonition, proceeds to say, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish." So far, also, there is no exception to be taken to the wisdom of his precept. The Jews had a custom, resting on a humane motive, to administer a sustaining stimulant or a narcotic to those undergoing punishment, in order to alleviate their pains. Something of this kind was offered to Jesus on the cross. But the counsellor does not stop at this point. He says: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." There need be no hesitancy in saying that this last exhortation is about the worst advice that could possibly be given to a person in affliction, or dispirited by the loss of property. The thing to tell him, especially if he has an appetite for strong drink, is to avoid it as he would shun poison. Yet our remark amounts to nothing more than this, that the sacred author sets up a barrier against only a part of the mischief which is wrought by intemperance. His vision went thus far, but no farther. It is a case where, to quote a homely modern proverb, "Half a loaf is better than no bread." It would be a great gain for morality and for the well-being of society if magistrates could be made abstinent.

On this general subject there is no more explicit criticism of Old Testament law than is contained in the words of Jesus respecting divorce. The law of Moses permitted a husband to discard his wife, but curtailed his privilege by requiring him to furnish her with a written statement which might serve as a means of protection for her. This statute, as far as the allowance to the man which was included in it is concerned, is declared by Christ to have been framed on account of "the hardness of heart" of the people. It fell below the requirement of immutable morality. It was a partial toleration of an abuse which it was then impracticable to seek to cut off altogether. But Christianity lifted the whole subject to a higher level. It presented a profounder view of the marriage relation. It superseded and annulled the Mosaic enactment.

The advance of the New Testament revelation in its relation to the Old has become, in these days, obvious. But the New Testament revelation, in itself considered, was not made in an instant as by a lightning flash. It did not come into being in all its fulness in a moment, as the fabled Minerva sprang from the



head of Jove. As in the case of the earlier revelation, the note of gradualness is attached to it. The fundamental fact of Christianity is the uniting of God to man in the person of Jesus Christ. Peter's confession respecting his person is the rock on which the Church was founded. The Epistle to the Hebrews opens with the following striking passage (as given in the Revised Version) : " God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." The former revelations were made through various channels, and were besides of a fragmentary character. They paved the way for the final revelation through the Son, whom the writer proceeds to liken, in his relation to God, to the effulgence of a luminous body. But modern exegesis and modern theological thought, while leaving untouched the divinity of Jesus, have brought into clear light that progressive development of the Saviour's person from the incarnation at the starting-point. Not until his earthly career terminated and he was " glorified " was the union of God and man in his person, in its effects, consummated. More was involved in his being in the " form of a servant " than theology in former days conceived. Nothing is more clear from his own language respecting himself, as well as from what the apostles say of him, than that there were limitations of his knowledge. On a certain day Jesus started from Bethany for Jerusalem. He was hungry. Seeing at a distance a fig-tree with leaves upon it, he went toward it, expecting to find fruit, — it being a tree of that kind which produces its fruit before putting out the leaves. But when he came to it his expectation was deceived ; " he found nothing but leaves." Jesus said that he did not know when the day of judgment would come. Apart from conclusive testimonies of this character, it is evident from the whole tenor of the Gospel histories that he was not conscious of the power to exercise divine attributes in their fulness of activity. The opposite idea gives a mechanical character to his actions and to most of his teachings. How, if he was all the while in the exercise of omniscience, could he " marvel " at the unbelief of certain of his hearers? That when he was a speechless babe in his mother's arms he was consciously possessed of infinite knowledge, is an impossible conception. And the difficulties of such a conception are only lessened in degree at any other subsequent day while he was " in the flesh." When we behold him at the last, prior to

the crucifixion, we find his soul poured out in the agonizing supplication, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The supposition of a dual personality in Christ is not less contrary to the scriptures and to the creed of the Church than it is offensive to common sense and to philosophy. Yet he was conscious of a unity with God altogether exceptional, and the unfolding within him of this unassailable conviction kept pace with the development of his human consciousness. The dawning sense of the unique relation in which he stood to God comes out in his boyhood, in the words addressed to his mother when he was found with the doctors in the temple, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" And the limitations of Jesus must not be exaggerated or made the premise of unwarranted inferences. He knew the boundaries of his province as a teacher, and never overstepped them. Just as he refused to be an arbiter in a contest about an inheritance, saying, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" so did he abstain from authoritative utterances on matters falling distinctly within the sphere of human science. No honor is done to him, and no help afforded to the cause of Christianity, in attributing to him scholastic information which he did not claim for himself and which there is no evidence that he possessed. It is not less important, however, to observe that, notwithstanding the limits that were set about him by the fact of his real humanity, and as long as he dwelt among men, there was yet an inlet into his consciousness from the fountain of all truth. "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). His knowledge differed in its source, in its kind and degree, from that of all other sons of men. "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." The divine in him was not a temporary visitation, as when the Spirit dwelt for a brief time—sojourned, one may be permitted to say—in the soul of a prophet like Isaiah. Even then God spoke through the prophet, and the mind of the prophet might for the moment become so fully the organ of God that he spoke through the prophet's lips in the first person. But in Christ there was an "abiding" of the Father. The union was such that the whole mental and moral life of Jesus was an expression of God's mind and will. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." As

conscience in me is the voice of another, yet is not distinct from my own being, so of Christ is it true that the Father was in him, — another, yet not another. And this union, although real from the beginning, culminated in its effects not until a complete ethical oneness was attained, at the end of all temptation and suffering, — the oneness which found utterance in the words, “Howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt.” This was the transition-point to the perfect development of his being, which is styled his “glorification.” As the risen and ascended Christ, he can be touched with sympathy with the human infirmities of which he has had experience, at the same time that he can be present with his disciples wherever they are, — can be in the midst of the smallest group of them who are met for worship.

From Jesus himself we have a distinct assurance that the revelation which he was to make was not to end with his oral teaching. Near the end of his life he said to the disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” They were not ripe for the comprehension of important truth, which therefore he held in reserve. The Holy Spirit was to open their eyes to the perception of things which they were not yet qualified to appreciate. The communication of the Spirit ushered in a new epoch. Then the apostles took a wider and deeper view of the purport of the Gospel. We find in the Epistles an unfolding of doctrine which we discover in the germ in the conversations and discourses of Jesus. It was impossible, for example, that the design of his death could be adequately discerned prior to the event itself, and as long as the disciples could not be reconciled even to the expectation of it. In isolated sayings of Jesus, in particular in what he said at the institution of the Lord’s Supper, the import of it is taught. The giving of his life, he said figuratively on another occasion, was to avail in some way, as a ransom. But it was not until the cross had been raised that the doctrine of the cross was made an essential part of Christian teaching, and the great sacrifice became a theme of doctrinal exposition. By this subsequent teaching a void which had been left in the instructions of the Master was filled. In his teaching there were two elements, standing, so to speak, apart from each other. On the one hand, he set forth the inexorable demands of righteous law. In this respect no portion of the older scriptures, in which law was so prominent a theme, is equally adapted to strike the conscience

with dismay. On the other hand, there was in the teaching of Jesus the most emphatic proclamation of God's compassion and forgiving love. These two sides of the Saviour's teaching are connected and harmonized in the apostolic exposition of the atonement.

The apostles themselves, individually, as regards their perceptions of truth, their insight into the meaning of the Gospel and its bearings on human duty and destiny, did not remain stationary. How they attained to a more catholic view of the relation of the Gentiles to the Gospel and to the Church, the New Testament scriptures explain. Apart from this subject, where their progressive enlightenment is so conspicuous a fact, there can be no doubt that from day to day they grew in knowledge. When the earliest writings of Paul, the Epistles to the Thessalonians, are compared with two of his latest writings,—the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians,—we not only find perceptible modifications of tone, but in the later compositions we find also views on the scope of the Gospel—what may be termed the universal, or cosmical, relations of the work of redemption—such as do not appear in his first productions. As a minor peculiarity, it may be mentioned that when he wrote to the Thessalonians he seems to have expected to be alive when the Lord should come in his Second Advent; while in his latest Epistles this hope or expectation has passed out of his mind. As the Gospel and the First Epistle of John are the latest of the apostolic writings, it is permissible to regard them as the fullest and ripest statement of the theologic import of the Gospel.

The ordinary Protestant doctrine respecting the seat of authority requires, in order to have a tenable basis, that the gradualness of revelation be taken into account. The authority of the Bible must be understood as applicable within the sphere of moral and religious teaching. The biblical writers, with this very important qualification, entertained the views current in their times on the matters now included in the function of natural and physical science. The historical writers were not addicted to antiquarian researches. Their predominant motive as authors was moral and religious. It was a great mistake formerly to predicate of them the absolute accuracy in narrative which is prized and, in a measure, exacted, in modern savans. The root of the Protestant prin-

ciple on the seat of authority is faith in the supreme authority of Jesus Christ as a moral and religious teacher. Such authority over faith and conduct, if ascribed to the Bible, must be attributed to the Bible as a whole, and not, in the strict sense, to its parts individually considered. This is clear enough from the way in which Jesus himself spoke of Old Testament precepts and other teachings, and from a similar course on the part of the apostles. The truth to which attention is now called is this : the amendment in which we are justified by the Protestant maxims, so far as biblical writings belonging to earlier stages of revelation are concerned, is authorized by Christ in the New Testament. For example, when we take exception to precepts uttered or approved by prophets concerning the way of regarding and treating enemies, we follow the dictates of the Sermon on the Mount. We are still within the circle of biblical instruction or command, or of the one example recognized as perfect. In short, it is the Bible as a whole, and considered as a self-interpreting—we might say, self-amending—authority, that we are either bound to obey, or are safe in following.<sup>1</sup> History is an instructive witness to the mischief that has been wrought from an oversight of this principle ; for example, from regarding the Mosaic system as the model of a Christian commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> This truth is well stated by Rothe, in his *Zur Dogmatik*.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO OTHER RELIGIONS

CHRISTIANITY is one of many religions which exist or have existed in the world. They may be divided into three classes, — the religions of barbarian tribes, past and present ; the national religions, which have sprung up within a single nation or race, and have not striven for a farther extension ; and the universal religions, which, not content to stay within national boundaries, have aspired to a general or universal sway. To this last class, Buddhism and Christianity unquestionably belong. The religion of the Israelites, before it assumed the Christian form, had spread extensively among men of foreign birth ; and its adherents were zealous in making proselytes. Yet converts were partly or fully transformed into Jews, and incorporated with the race of Israel. Mohammedanism was at first the religion of one people, and at the outset it may not have been the design of its founder to extend it beyond the national limits. But the design was widened : it became a conquering faith, and has, in fact, included within its pale numerous votaries of different nations and tongues.

The study of pagan and ethnic religions has been carried forward, in later times, in a more sympathetic spirit. Elements of truth and beauty have been carefully sought out in the beliefs and worship of heathen nations. Religious ideas and moral precepts which deserve respect have been pointed out in the ethnic creeds. The aspirations at the root of the religions outside of the pale of Christianity, the struggle of the soul to connect itself with the supernatural, and to realize ideals of an excellence above any present attainment, have been justly appreciated. This aspect of heathenism, it should be observed, however, is recognized in the New Testament. The apostle Paul builds his discourse at Athens on the acknowledged ignorance of the Divinity, for whom there was, nevertheless, a search and a virtually confessed yearning. He cites the teaching of certain heathen poets as consonant with the truth on the great point of man's filial relation to the Deity. The

Christian Fathers traced wise and holy sayings of heathen sages to rays of light from the Logos, — the Divine Word, — or to an illumination from the Spirit of God. Devout missionaries, in recent days, have been impressed with the conviction that individuals, of whom Confucius was one, have been providentially raised up to be the guides of their people, to instil into them higher truth, and to prepare them for better things. Points of affinity and of accordance between the Bible and the sacred scriptures of peoples ignorant of Christianity have not been overlooked by Christian scholars. Even the fables of mythology may betray glimpses of truth not capable of being grasped on the plane of nature. They may disclose a craving which Christianity alone avails to appease, and may thus be unconscious prophecies of Him who is the desire of all nations. Even the Avatars of Vishnu, countless in number, indicate that through man the full revelation of God is looked for. They may be considered a presage, in a crude form, of the historic fact of the Incarnation.

Christianity differs from the other religions in its contents, and in the verifiable sanction which furnishes the ground for an assured belief. This last feature is of itself a distinguishing merit. If much that is taught by Christ and the apostles should be found here and there in the literature of the world, the supernatural sanction which changes hope into assurance, and doubting belief into conviction, would be of itself an inestimable advantage. In this place it is the contents of Christianity which we have to consider in comparison with the tenets of other creeds.

When we say of Christianity that it is the absolute religion, it is not meant that we have in it a full-orbed discovery of divine things. "We know in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9). It is meant that Christianity is not to be classified with other religions as if it were defective in the sense of containing error, or as if it stood in need of a complement to be expected or required on the present stage of human life. With no limit to its increasing capacity to illuminate right action, it is now in substance and in its principles incapable of amendment.

It is well, at the outset, to give prominence to the grand peculiarity of the Christian religion, which constitutes the central point of difference between it and the ethnic religions. Revelation is the revelation — the self-revelation — of GOD. The doctrine of God is the sun which irradiates the whole system, and keeps

every part in its place. There may be excellent moral suggestions in the non-Christian systems and cults. There may be partial, momentary glimpses of the Divine Being himself in certain aspects of his character. But nowhere, save in the religion of the Bible, and in systems borrowed from it, is there a full view of the perfections of God,—such a view as gives to moral precepts their proper setting and the most effectual motive to their observance. This essential characteristic of Christianity the apostle Paul held up to view in his discourse at Athens. There was worship—in its way, genuine worship—among the heathen, but an ignorance of its true object. It was so far an agnosticism as to leave a void in the soul of the worshipper. In a few striking sentences the apostle, justifying his title of the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” presented to view the only living God, a Spirit, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, in whom we live, and to whom we are responsible. The whole conception of man, of his duties and destiny, and of the goal to which all things tend, is colored and determined by the primary ideas relative to God. What, let us now inquire, have other religions to say of him? Heathen religions generally fail altogether to disengage God from nature. Hence polytheism is the prevailing fact. Whether the various religions preserve in them traces of an earlier monotheism is a disputed point; scholars are not agreed on the question; and a bias, on one side or on the other, frequently appears in the recent discussions upon it. As the existing diversity of languages is entirely consistent with the hypothesis of an original unity of speech, although the phenomena do not positively establish this doctrine, so it may be possibly respecting religion. Vestiges of a primitive simple theism may have utterly disappeared, yet such may have been the religion of the primitive man. Certain it is that, as we contemplate the religions which history and ancient literature exhibit to us, we find them at a distant remove from a pure and spiritual apprehension of the Deity. Where there was a supreme God, other divinities divided power with him; and none of them were conceived of as absolute, as independent of nature. Tien, or Shang-ti, the supreme God of the Chinese, was Heaven conceived of as Lord or sovereign Emperor. Dr. Legge, the learned translator of Confucius, holds that “Tien” signifies the Lord of the Heavens. He finds in the conception an early monotheism. This was not the understanding of the Roman Catholic mission-

aries in the last century, nor is it the interpretation of the most competent missionaries at present. The testimony of Chinese authors, says Dr. Hopper, "is uniform and the same. Everywhere it is the visible heaven which is referred to." "They refer to an intelligent soul animating the visible heaven, as the soul animates the body of a man." The religion of the Bactrian prophet Zoroaster was a dualism. An eternal principle of evil, a god of darkness, the source of everything baleful and hateful, contends against the rival deity, and is never overcome. Max Müller has designated the religion of the Sanskrit-speaking Indians, the system of the Vedas, as henotheism, by which he means the worship of numerous divinities, each of which, however, in the act of worship, is clothed with such attributes as imply that the other divinities are for the moment forgotten, and which might logically abolish them. This is really polytheism with a peculiar monistic drift. But Professor W. D. Whitney, than whom there is no higher authority on the subject, dissents from this theory, and attributes the exalted attributes attached to the particular god at the moment of worship mainly to a natural exaggeration. Professor Whitney declares that "there is no known form of religious faith which presents a polytheism more pure and more absolute than the Vedic religion."<sup>1</sup> Whether monotheism entered into the ancient religion of Egypt is an unsettled debate. It is maintained by Renouf that the Egyptian monuments and literature exhibit a mingling of monotheism and polytheism; that there was a conception of one God with sublime attributes—an idea connected, however, with the notion of a plurality of divinities and with debased superstitions. The sublime conception, Renouf contends, was the most ancient. Mr. G. Rawlinson takes the same position, holding that there was a purer, esoteric faith, the religion of the educated class, alongside of the polytheism and idolatry in which the multitude were sunk.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, Lepsius thinks that the Egyptian religion took its start in sun-worship. Other Egyptologists would make sun-worship intermediate between an earlier monotheism and polytheism. The religion of the Greeks, as all know, was a polytheism in which there is a struggle toward unity in the lofty image of Zeus, as the father of gods and men, and as the fountain of law and right, which is found in the writings of Sophocles and

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, tom. vi. (1882), No. 5, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *The Religions of the Ancient World*, p. 29.

of his contemporaries. Turning to a much later religion, — the religion of Mohammed, — we find passages in the Koran which imply not only a genuine faith in the Supreme Being, but also the ascription to him of certain exalted moral attributes. "Your God is one God : there is no God but he, the merciful, the compassionate."<sup>1</sup> Paradise is "for those who expend in alms in prosperity and adversity, for those who repress their rage, and those who pardon men. God loves the kind. Those who, when they do a crime, or wrong themselves, remember God and ask forgiveness of their sins, — and who forgives sins save God? — and do not persevere in what they did, the while they know, these have their reward, — pardon from their Lord," etc.<sup>2</sup>

Passages like these, taken by themselves, would give a higher idea of Mohammed's system than a wider view warrants. Those other representations must be taken into account, in which the holiness of God is obscured, the prophet's fierce resentment is ascribed to the Lord, and a sensual paradise promised to the faithful. "And when ye meet those who misbelieve — then strike off heads until ye have massacred them, and bind fast the bonds. . . . Those who are slain in God's cause. . . . He will make them enter into paradise."<sup>3</sup> But the higher elements in the religion of Mohammed, strongly as they seized upon his faith, did not begin with him. Kuenen argues that he knew little of Abraham, and that the identification of his creed with that ascribed to the patriarch, which is found in the Koran, was an afterthought.<sup>4</sup> However imperfect his knowledge of Abraham's history was, the name of the patriarch was familiar to him. It is of more consequence to remember that his main tenet was the familiar belief of the Jews, which a circle of Arab devotees probably still cherished. The religion of Mohammed was a fanatical crusade against polytheism and idolatry, first among the Arabs, and then in the degenerate Christianity of the Eastern Church. The ultimate source of all that is good in Mohammed's movement is the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which he did not refuse to acknowledge, little as he really knew of their contents, and far as he was from comprehending the

<sup>1</sup> *The Koran*, Professor Palmer's translation, ch. ii. [150], (vol. i. p. 22).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, c. iii. [125], [130], vol. i. p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, c. xlvii. [5], (vol. ii. p. 229).

<sup>4</sup> Kuenen, *National Religions and Universal Religions*, p. 12, sec. 4.



prophetic or Messianic element of the Old Testament religion, or its fulfilment in the Gospel. Mohammedanism has one grand idea of the Old Testament, the idea of God, but with the attribute of holiness largely subtracted, and divested of the principle of progress, which issued, in the case of the religion of Israel, in the kingdom of Christ, the universal religion of Jesus.

History indicates that polytheism, whatever be its origin, tends, in the case of nations that advance in intelligence, to some species of monotheism. Professor Whitney finds "unmistakable indications of the beginnings of a tendency to unity in the later Vedic hymns."<sup>1</sup> The Græco-Roman religion had resolved itself, in the minds of Plutarch and many of his contemporaries, into a belief in one Supreme Being, with a host of subordinate divinities. In the second century of the Christian era, under the influence of philosophy, God was conceived of as one Being; and the minor deities were thought of, either as representing the variety of his functions, or as instruments of his providence. This was the mode of thinking in cultivated classes. The belief and rites of the common people remained unaltered. But here a most important fact must be brought to the attention of the reader. We find that the tendencies to unification, although they may beget a sort of monotheism which lingers for a time, commonly issue in Pantheism. They do not stop at monotheism as a finality. Nature still holds the spirit in its fetters. If it is not a multitude of deities, more or less involved in natural forces and functions, it is nature as a whole, figured as an impersonal agency, into which deity is merged. It was so in the ancient classical nations. The esoteric philosophy and theology did not continue deistic; it lapsed into Pantheism.

The religions of India are a notable illustration of this apparent helplessness of the spirit to rise above nature, above the realm of things finite, to the absolute and personal Being, from whom are all things. One of the most learned and trustworthy of the expositors of the religions of India says, "India is radically pantheistic, and that from its cradle onwards."<sup>2</sup> When we

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, tom. vi. (1882), No. 5, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 8. Barth's work still retains its value, although not a recent publication. Among recent works, two volumes by Professor Edward Hopkins are especially characterized by accurate learning and by fairness: *The Religions of India* (1895); *India Old and New* (1901): ("Yale's Bicentennial Publications").

examine the Brahmanical religion as it was developed on the banks of the Ganges, we find a thoroughly pantheistic system. Emanation is the method by which finite things originate. Brahma is the impersonal essence or life of all things : from Brahma, gods, men, the earth, and all things else, proceed. This alienation from Brahma is evil. The finite soul can find no peace, save in the return to Brahma,—the extinction of personal consciousness. The laws of Manu close with the sentiment, “He who in his own soul perceives the Supreme Soul in all beings, and acquires equanimity toward all, attains the highest state of bliss.” The Stoics, and Spinoza, and occasional sayings of Emerson are anticipated in this Hindoo sentence. All the horrors of transmigration, and all the torments of Brahmanical asceticism, have a genetic relation to this fundamental pantheistic tenet.

Buddhism is the religion which at present is most lauded by those who would put Christianity on a level with the heathen creeds. We may pass by the perplexing inquiry as to how much the life of its founder is history, and how much in the narrative is myth. That Buddha was an earnest man, deeply struck with a sense of the misery of the world, and anxious to do good, may be safely concluded. He looked upon the multitude with heart-felt compassion. The sages hoped for eventual happiness only through painful and life-long asceticism. The common people were enslaved to unintelligible ceremonies, and held down under the tyranny of the caste-system. That he made large sacrifices of worldly good in pursuit of his benevolent purpose is equally certain. That the moral precepts which he enjoined, and the moral spirit which he recommended and practised, are marked by a purity and benevolence scarcely to be found in the same degree elsewhere, outside of the pale of Christianity, is evident. Yet nothing can be better adapted to impress one with the immeasurable superiority of Christianity to non-Christian systems in their best forms than a close attention to the Buddhistic system.

What now according to Buddha, or Çâkyamuni, is the cause, and what the cure, of the ills of life? His theory is embodied in the four principles: (1) Existence is always attended with misery; to exist is to suffer; (2) The cause of pain is desire, which increases with its gratification; (3) Hence the cessation or suppression of desire is necessary; (4) There are four stages in the way to this result,—four things are requisite. These are, first,

an awakening to the consciousness that to exist is to be miserable, and to the perception that misery is the fruit of desire or passion; secondly, the escape, through this knowledge, from impure and revengeful feelings; thirdly, the getting rid successively of all evil desires, then of ignorance, then of doubt, then of heresy, then of unkindliness and vexation. When the believer has reached the fourth stage, he is ready for Nirvâna. What is Nirvâna? What is the blessed goal where all self-discipline reaches its reward? It is the extinction of personal being. It is annihilation. That this is the doctrine of Buddha, scholars generally hold.<sup>1</sup> The same scholars who declare this to be the outcome of the latest and most thorough investigations also find that Nirvâna was held to be attainable in this life;<sup>2</sup> that is, this term was applied by early Buddhist teachers to the serenity which is reached by the saint here. But this does not imply that there is a continuance of individual being beyond death.<sup>3</sup> Buddha himself steadily refused to give an answer to the question. The most competent scholars rightly conclude that he did not believe in an existence after death. So far as Nirvâna is the extinction of those evil passions and the deliverance from that grievance which deprives us of peace, it is even attainable in this life. But the sole blessing that comes with death is the full and final parting with the weariness of existence.<sup>4</sup> It is sometimes thought that transmigration is inconsistent with the denial that the soul is a substantial entity. But the pantheistic theory as seen in the Brahmanical system, while it subtracts personality from the soul, may hold that the finite being which we call "the soul" may be embodied not once only, but an indefinite number of times. Yet to exist as distinct from the Absolute, or as self-conscious, is the evil of evils. But while some have thought that Buddha himself may possibly have held to the "vaguely apprehended and feebly postulated *ego*," passing from one existence to another,—a doctrine found in the

<sup>1</sup> See T. W. Rhys Davids's article, "Buddhism," *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. iv. p. 434; Barth, p. 110; Tiele's *Outlines of the History of Religion*, etc., p. 35; Koepen, *Die Religion d. Buddha*, i. 306; Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Rhys Davids's *Lectures on Origin and Growth of Religion*, etc., pp. 100, 253.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 321. "Orthodox teaching in the ancient order of Buddhists inculcated expressly on its converts to forgo the knowledge of the being or non-being of the perfected saint." — Oldenburg, *Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, p. 276.

Sanskrit books of the North,<sup>1</sup>—without question, the accepted doctrine of the sect was, that the Buddhist, strictly speaking, does not revive, but another in his place, —the “Karma,” which is the reunion of the constituent qualities that made up his being. “Such is the doctrine of the entire orthodox literature of Southern Buddhism.”<sup>2</sup> “Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul as a thing distinct from the parts and powers of man which are dissolved at death; and the Nirvâna of Buddhism is simply extinction.”<sup>3</sup> “Buddha believed neither in God nor soul, but he believed, and every form of his church believed, in the transmigration of character, as an entity, with a new body, a theory which has nothing to do with heredity, with which it has been compared.”<sup>4</sup> The Buddhist aspires to Nirvâna, to the end that he may avert the pains of transmigration from another, his heir or successor.

Dr. Fairbairn, in a just appreciation of the excellences of Buddha's teaching, styles him “a transcendent theist.”<sup>5</sup> He points out that “nothing could be farther than the soul or system of the Buddha from what we mean by Pantheism.” It is explained that his denial of Brahmanisms and his altruistic ethics are in their spirit theistic.<sup>6</sup> And it is explained further that “Buddha's theory was pessimistic, for it conceived being as sorrow, and the discipline he enforced was a method for the cessation of personal existence.”<sup>7</sup> Buddhism may be described as the apotheosis of the ethical personality—the deification was none the less complete that the religion knew no God, though it was a result that at once paralyzed the intellect and quickened and satisfied the heart.<sup>8</sup>

It is in this method of self-discipline, and in the tempers of heart which are inculcated, that the exceptionally attractive points of Buddhism are comprised. Chastity, temperance, patience, and, crowning all, universal charity are to be earnestly cultivated as the indispensable means of redemption from the dread of transmigration and from the pains of existence. His personal traits were the most potent cause of the spread of his influence.

It is obvious what are the merits of Buddhism and their limits.

<sup>1</sup> Barth, pp. 112, 113.

<sup>2</sup> Burnouf, *Introd.*, p. 507 (Barth, p. 112).

<sup>3</sup> Rhys Davids, *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. iv. p. 434, where the proofs are given.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins, *India Old and New*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Buddha was no avowed antagonist of the traditional Brahminical religion. He set on foot no crusade against caste. Warfare against Brahmanism and caste arose later. There is a common family likeness between his doctrine and the contemporary speculations of the philosophy of the Brahmins. In a tone lacking the justly sympathetic spirit of Dr. Fairbairn, an eminent scholar has said : "Atheism, scornful disregard of the cultus and tradition, the conception of a religion entirely spiritual, a contempt for finite existence, belief in transmigration, and the necessity of deliverance from it, the feeble idea of the personality of man," — these are among the features found in Buddhism and the Upanishads.<sup>1</sup>

The monkish system, which became so popular after the death of Buddha, was as blighting in its influence on intellectual development, and as adverse to the well-being of men, as anything in the Brahmanical creed or rites. The *first* monasteries had for their aim study and the cultivation of the spirit of which Buddha was an example. Monasticism, as Kuenen has remarked, is an excrescence in the Christian system. The "Son of man came eating and drinking." "There could be no Buddhism without 'bhikshus' — there is a Christianity without monks." "That which in one case constitutes the very essence of the religion and cannot be removed from it, even in thought, without annulling the system itself, is in the other case . . . the natural but one-sided development of certain elements in the original movement, coupled with gross neglect of others which have equal or still higher right to assert themselves."<sup>2</sup>

Buddha was the great apostle of Pessimism, since he sought to point out a virtuous method of getting rid of existence. The Brahman sought to save himself ; Buddha sought, also, to save others. But from what? From the ills of conscious existence. It remains a literal truth that "Buddha believed neither in God nor soul." It is literally a system without God and without hope, save the negative hope of deliverance from personal life. He invited the victims of sorrow and terror to imitate him with no promise of escape from annihilation ! Contrast the invitation of Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ! This rest was in fellowship with him, involving in it communion with the heavenly Father, without whom not a sparrow falls, who makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and

<sup>1</sup> Barth, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Kuenen, p. 306.



opens the gates of heaven at last to the soul that has been trained by earthly service for the higher service and unmingled blessedness of the life to come.

In expressions in the New Testament on the burdens that attend our life on earth there is a radical unlikeness to the pessimism of the founder of Buddhism. The teleology of Buddha holds out no prospect of a ripeness of character which leads to a perfection of conscious blessedness, the life everlasting. Buddhism, vigorous at its birth, "has been smitten with premature decrepitude. . . . Some are at times fain to regard Buddhism as a spiritual emancipation, a kind of Hindoo Reformation ; and there is no doubt that in certain respects it was both." But it created an institution "far more illiberal, and formidable to spiritual independence," than the caste system. "Not only did all the vitality of the Church continue in a clergy living apart from the world ; but among this clergy itself the conquering zeal of the first centuries gradually died away under the influence of Quietism and the discipline enforced. . . . All boldness and true originality of thought disappeared in the end in the bosom of this spirit-weakening organization."<sup>1</sup> The secret of its decadence in India, its original home, was its own degeneracy. It became at length "as much a skeleton as was the Brahmanism of the sixth century. As the Brahmanic belief had decomposed into spiritless rites, so Buddhism, changed into dialectic and idolatry (for in lieu of a god the later church worshipped Buddha), had lost now all hold upon the people. The love of man, the spirit of Buddhism, was dead, and Buddhism crumbled into the dust."<sup>2</sup>

What is the real significance of Buddhism as an historical phenomenon? It is the most powerful testimony ever given to the burden that rests on human nature. From its millions upon millions of adherents there arises an unconscious call for the help which their own system cannot provide. Buddhism, in its inmost purport, is a part of the wail of humanity in its yearning for redemption. It is an eloquent witness to the need of Revelation. It is a comment on the text, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son."

The parallelisms existing, or supposed to exist, between passages in the Buddhistic and other Hindoo religious writings and passages in the gospels have occasioned much discussion. These relate to sayings and to historical circumstances. They are reviewed care-

<sup>1</sup> Barth, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 342.

fully and with studious impartiality by Professor Hopkins.<sup>1</sup> As concerned with *facts*, the "parallels" are in Buddhism. These are more than fifty in number. Of these, only five are of a date to lend even plausibility to the idea of a borrowing on the side of Christianity. One of the most noted of them is that pertaining to the miraculous conception. In the story of the miraculous birth of Buddha the early texts declare that his mother is not a virgin. The notion of an indebtedness of Christianity to the Buddhistic tale and child-cult is on other accounts void of probability. In general, the evidence bears out the conclusion of Professor Hopkins, "Where the parallels make borrowing seem probable, as in the case of miracles and legends not found in other religions, and striking enough to suggest a loan, the historical evidence is strongly in favor of Christianity having been not the copyist but the originator."<sup>2</sup> So far as *sayings* are concerned, the supposed parallels belong to Krishnaism, the type of religion of which Krishna, a local leader, imagined to be an incarnation of Vishnu, was the originator. The literature here is later than the time of Buddha. In Krishnaism the imagined loan to the gospels, as regards the Synoptics, is evidently destitute of substantial proof. The same conclusion is justified upon due examination in the case of John. This Gospel was of a character "that made it peculiarly suitable to influence the Hindoo divines, who transferred from it such phrases and sentiments as best fitted in with the conception of Krishna as a god of love."<sup>3</sup> Christian teaching in the first centuries had various avenues of access and of influence on the thought of India and its religious guides. Professor Hopkins, while anxious to avoid any statement not well attested, says, "I must confess that the ingrowth of Christian ideas may have been deeper than we can state with certainty, and that, for example, the little band of early Christians in South India may have been instrumental in fashioning the lofty ideals of some of the noble religions which we know existed in after time and the influence of which in their turn may still be potent among the sects of to-day."<sup>4</sup>

Christianity received from its parent, the religion of Israel, the truth of a living, personal God — a God not merged in nature,

<sup>1</sup> The elaborate discussion bearing the title "Christ in India," in *India Old and New*, covers pp. 120-168.

<sup>2</sup> *India Old and New*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

but the Author of nature. The personality of God gives to man his true place. Man is a person ; and religion, instead of being a mystic absorption of the individual, is the communion of person with person. Immortality is personal. The guaranty and evidence of it is in the relation of man to God, and in the exalted position which is thereby conferred on man. This guaranty becomes a joyous assurance, when the believer is conscious of being spiritually united to Jesus Christ, and a partaker of his life. The great idea of the kingdom of God is the object of aspiration and of effort — the goal of history. The life that now is, instead of being branded as a curse, is made a theatre for the realization of a divine purpose, and the school for a state of being for which, when rightly used, it is the natural precursor.

Through such characteristics as these, Christianity is fitted to be the religion of mankind. None of the systems which have aspired to this distinction has the remotest hope of attaining it. None of these systems contains a single element of value, which is not found in its own place in the Christian system. On the contrary, there is nothing in Christianity which forms any permanent barrier to its acceptance by any race or nation. No other religion has in an equal degree proved its adaptedness to be the religion of the world. It addresses itself, not to a single people, nor to any branch of the human race exclusively or specially, but to mankind. The apostles were directed to carry it "to every creature." The idea of the brotherhood of the race becomes in Christianity a realized fact. Appealing to a common religious nature, a common consciousness of sin and of the need of help, a common sense of the burden of sorrow and mortality, and offering a remedy which is equally adapted to all, Christianity shows itself possessed of the attributes of a universal religion. Being, on the practical side, a religion of principles, and not of rules, it enters into every form of human society and every variety of individual character, with a renovating and moulding agency.

How shall the rise of such a religion be accounted for? We are pointed back to Hebrew monotheism. But here we meet with a phenomenon altogether unique, both in its origin and in its effects. That the doctrine of Moses was not derived from the religion of Egypt, scholars of every type of theological belief unite in affirming. The question whence Moses derived his idea of God, says Wellhausen, "could not possibly be worse answered than by a

reference to his relations with the priestly caste of Egypt and their wisdom. It is not to be believed that an Egyptian deity could inspire the Hebrews of Goshen with courage for the struggle against the Egyptians, or that an abstraction of esoteric speculation could become the national deity of Israel."<sup>1</sup> "Amongst students of Israelite religion," says Kuenen, "there is not, as far as I know, a single one who derives Yahvism" — the worship of Jehovah — "from Egypt, either in the strange manner hit upon by Comte, or in any other."<sup>2</sup> "It may be confidently asserted," says Renouf, "that neither Hebrews nor Greeks borrowed any of their ideas from Egypt."<sup>3</sup> The Decalogue commands the exclusive worship of Jehovah. The spirituality of the conception is carried out in the prohibition of all images and representations of him. The substratum of the "Ten Words" is ascribed to Moses by Ewald and many other critics. The additional prohibition is considered by many to be of a later date. Dillmann is of the contrary opinion: "In the post-Mosaic period," he says, "at least in the central sanctuary of the whole people, and in the temple of Solomon, the unrepresentable character of Jehovah through any image was a recognized principle. The worship of an image on Sinai (Exod. xxxii.), in the time of the judges, in the kingdom of the ten tribes, does not prove that a prohibition of image-worship was not known, but only that it was very hard in the mass of the people, especially of the northern tribes, which were more under Canaanite influences, to bring this law to a recognition; and for centuries, in fact, it was a subject of strife between a stricter and a laxer party, since the latter only forbade an image of a false god, the former forbade every image of Jehovah likewise."<sup>4</sup> The prophets Amos and Hosea do not insist on the exclusion of images as if this prohibition were anything new. We need not inquire whether the non-existence of other deities was expressly asserted in the Mosaic teaching or not.<sup>5</sup> Since Moses did not derive the idea of God from the Egyptian theology, both the historical records and the probabilities of the case testify that it was the God of the forefathers whose existence, and relations

<sup>1</sup> *Encycl. Brit.*, art. "Israel," vol. xiii. p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *National Religions and Universal Religions*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Bücher Exodus u. Leviticus*, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> On this subject, see Oehler, ii. 155.



to the people, were by him brought home afresh to their consciousness. The entire work of Moses as a founder admits of no historical explanation, without the assumption of a higher religion before, such as, according to Genesis, belonged to the fathers; but such a higher religion necessarily implies personal media, or representatives. "Advances in religion link themselves to eminent personalities; and the recollection of them is commonly kept up in the people who come after who have been gathered into unity as sharers in common of their faith." Hence the narrative of the faith of Abraham derives a strong historical corroboration from the faith and work of Moses.<sup>1</sup> Whatever difference may exist on the question whether belief in the existence of other gods outside of Israel, inferior to Jehovah, lingered among the people after the age of Moses, all allow that, as early as the eighth century, the conception of Jehovah as the only existing God was proclaimed by the prophets in the clearest manner. How unique was this monotheism! Other nations somehow made room for the gods of foreign peoples. They brought them into the Pantheon, or they gave them homes within their own proper boundaries. Not so with Israel. Jehovah was God, and there was no other. And he was a *holy* God. In this grand particular, the conception was distinguished from heathen ideas of divinity. How shall this idea of Jehovah, so peculiar and so elevated, be accounted for? The notion of a Semitic tendency to monotheism has a very slender foundation, and would lead us to expect the religion of Jehovah to arise in Babylon or Tyre as soon as among the people of Israel.

If we leave the question of the origin of Hebrew monotheism, how shall it be explained that it did not sink down, when it had once arisen, into Pantheism, as was the fact in other religions,—for example, in the religion of the Hindoos, and in the philosophy of the Greeks, which Lord Bacon calls "the pagan divinity"? How did this unique and extraordinary faith keep up its vitality, age after age, in the presence of seductive types of heathenism, and in the midst of political disintegration and ruin? How came the light, when it had dawned, to go on increasing to the perfect day, instead of fading out, as elsewhere, in the gloom of night?

Leaving these problems, too, unsolved, how was it that the Hebrew monotheism held within itself the seeds of so great a future? Assailants of the Old Testament religion never tire of

<sup>1</sup> See Dillmann, *Die Genesis*, pp. 228, 229.



dwelling on the alleged narrowness of Jewish theology, and on the selfish and unsocial character of their religious theory. It cannot be denied that, in spite of the injunctions of the prophets, who insisted that the election of Israel and its advantages were for a service to be rendered, the consciousness of being a Chosen People often engendered an arrogant and intolerant spirit toward the nations less favored; that is, the bulk of mankind. Yet what was the actual outcome? It was the religion of universal love, of the equality of men before God, of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of the race. It was the religion of Jesus. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Old Testament was the one book with which Jesus was familiar. In the teaching of the Old Testament the apostles were steeped. The originality of Jesus is not more marked, and his advance beyond all previous doctrine, than is the organic relation of his instruction and work, of the type of character which he exemplified and enjoined, to the Old Testament ideas. The God whom we worship, if we believe in God, is the God of the fathers of Israel, of Moses, of Samuel, of Isaiah, and of David, of Paul, and of John,—even the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no break in the unity of the religious consciousness from that far remote day when the progenitor of Israel believed in God, and was lifted above the life of sense by his communion with the Invisible. With this religious consciousness, the ethical development up to its consummation in the impartial justice and unselfish love of man as man, which is the rule of Christ, is inseparably connected. With it is connected the ever unfolding dictates and corollaries of this principle, by which wrongs and miseries are more and more discerned and lessened.

How shall such a religion, founded on such a conception of God, be accounted for? Who that believes in God can find it incredible that it springs from his revelation of himself,—a self-revelation, consummated in Christ? An examination of other religions, instead of shaking the faith of a Christian, tends to fortify it.

## APPENDIX

### NOTE 1 (p. 23)

WHEN the possession by man of a rational spirit, self-conscious and with the power of self-motion, is recognized, the key is found to the ultimate source of religion. On this question, one method of inquiry is to inspect the cults and customs of savage and half-civilized races. This appears strange in such as bring the history of religion under the law of evolution. One would expect them to look for the essential nature of religion, not in its rudimental forms, but rather through a study of its mature development. The juxtaposition of all sorts of religion, in quest of a common characteristic, is not the true method of science. Yet this is the method of Mr. Spencer. His course would be to discard whatever is distinctive in the various creeds and cults of the race, and to fasten on the residuum, an abstract idea.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional view that the human race sprang from one pair,—a view not treated with disfavor by certain eminent naturalists,—and the question as to the mental and moral characteristics of “man primeval,” are topics which there is not space here to discuss. Exaggerations on the last point, so common formerly,—as when the famous preacher, Robert South, said that Aristotle was the rubbish of Adam and Athens the ruins of Paradise,—are no longer heard. The deism of the last century made a full enlightenment respecting God, which theology ascribed to a revelation to the primitive man, to be the product of his own natural powers. This hypothesis is extinct; and if there were any sufficient warrant for that of a primitive revelation, it would still imply a religious capacity in the recipient of it. Religion cannot be created outright by a bare communication of facts respecting the supernatural. To be sure, the possibility of lapses, in the course of history, from a higher plane of religious knowledge, is sustained by facts and must be conceded. Yet the survival in various advanced types of religion of ideas and rites not essentially diverse from notions and cults now prevalent in rude tribes proves that an upward movement has been a widespread experience of mankind, whatever were the precise characteristics of the earliest religion.

<sup>1</sup> For a criticism of this faulty method, see Dr. E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. pp. 46 seq.

One thing is certain, that all speculations respecting the origin of religion which refer it purely to an empirical or accidental source are superficial. The theory that religious beliefs spring from tradition fails to give any account of their origin, to say nothing of their chronic continuance and of the tremendous power which they exert among men. The notion that religions are the invention of shrewd statesmen and rulers, devised by them as a means of managing the populace, probably has no advocates at present. It belongs among the obsolete theories of free-thinkers in the last century. How could religion be made so potent an instrument if its roots were not deep in human nature? *Timor facit deos* is another opinion. Its most interesting ancient expositor was Lucretius. Religion is supposed, on this view, to arise from the effect on rude minds of storms, convulsions of nature, and other phenomena which inspired terror and were referred to supernatural beings. But why should the thought of such beings spring up in this connection? It is a shallow hypothesis, which, for one thing, overlooks the fact that impressions of this kind are fleeting. They alternate, also, with aspects of nature of an entirely different character. If nature is terrific, it is likewise gracious and bountiful. Divinities having these mild traits appear in early mythologies. A favorite view of a school of anthropologists at present is that religion began in fetich-worship and arose by degrees through the worship of animals to a conception of loftier deities conceived of as being in human form. For this generalization the historical data are wanting. Even where fetich-worship exists, the material object itself is not the god. Rather is it true that the stick or stone is considered the vehicle or embodiment of divine agencies acting through it. "The external objects of nature never appear to the childish fantasy as mere things of sense, but always as animated beings, which, therefore, in some way or other, include in themselves a spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The "philological theory" has been elaborately set forth by Max Müller. It traces mythological beliefs to mistakes in interpreting language. Gender-terminations of words and phrases, implying life and motion, at first figuratively meant, but later taken literally, are supposed to account for the conceptions and tales of the heathen religions. This theory labors under difficulties too numerous and formidable to be overcome.<sup>2</sup> One of them is that the obtuse interpretation of metaphors is attributed not to barbarous, but to civilized men.

Animism, the natural tendency to personalize the objects and operations of nature, is the philosophy most accepted. But the term "animism" is employed by Tylor, one of its well-known advocates, to

<sup>1</sup> Pfeiderer, *Religionsphilosophie*, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> A recital of these objections may be read in A. Long's article, "Mythology," in *Encycl. Brit.*, vol. xxvii. p. 139.

comprise not only the worship of deceased human beings, but also the worship which springs from the ascription of spiritual life to material objects in the world about us, and to the natural phenomena which science assumes to connect with impersonal forces. Spencer, on the contrary, would confine the beginnings of religion to the worship of deceased ancestors.

No doubt animism, the natural impulse to personalize the objects and operations of nature, is a principal factor in solving the problem. Uncivilized peoples project into things, animate and inanimate, the life and personal qualities which belong to men as these are known to them. As such peoples may believe in their own kinship with animals and even with plants, and as they have faith in magical arts, irrational as well as savage myths arise. These often survive and then mingle with myths of a higher caste, which spring up in times less ignorant and brutal. Herbert Spencer, on the contrary, would confine the beginnings of religion to the worship of deceased ancestors, and from this would deduce the whole variety of religious notions and cults.

Ancestor-worship itself he would explain by a dream-theory and a ghost-theory combined.<sup>1</sup> The "primitive man," who is so far off as to give room for any number of guesses about him, mistakes his shadow for another man, the duplicate of himself. Whether he makes the same mistake about every rock and wigwam from which a shadow is cast, we are not told. His image seen in the water gives him a more definite idea of his other self. Echoes help still more in the same direction. Then there is the distinction between "the animate," or, rather, animals, and "the inanimate." Here Spencer rejects what the soundest writers on mythology hold, that the personifying imagination of men, who as regards reflection are children, confounds the inanimate with the living. The lower animals, dogs and horses, do not; and is man below them in knowledge? This position of Spencer is characteristic of his whole theory. If man were on the level of the dog or the horse, if he were not conscious, in some degree, of will and personality, then, like them, he might never impute to rivers and streams and trees personal life. Dreams, according to Spencer, create the fixed belief that there is a duplicate man, or soul, that wanders off from the body: hence the belief that the dead survive.<sup>2</sup> Naturally they become objects of reverence. So worship begins. Epilepsy, insanity, and the like confirm the notion that ghosts come and go. A *human* personality, it is held, is behind a tempest, an earthquake, and every unusual phenomenon. Temples were first the tombs of the dead. Fetiches were parts of their clothing. Idols were their images. The belief somehow arises that human beings disguise themselves as animals.

<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. ch. viii. seq.

<sup>2</sup> *First Principles*, 4th ed., p. 31.

Animal-worship is explained, in part, in this way, but mainly by a blunder of "the primitive man." There was a dearth of names; human beings were named after beasts; gradually the notion springs up that the animal who gave the name was the parent of the family. Plants with strange intoxicating qualities are assumed to be inhabited by ghosts. Plant-worship is the result.

Spencer, at the outset, in his *First Principles*, favored the idea that religion sprang out of a mistaken application of the causal principle to the explanation of nature and of man. The later theory sketched above is what he conceives that the evolution-doctrine demands. He differs, as will be perceived, from the archæologists who make religion start with fetichism. He frowns upon those evolutionists who allow, what they, like most scholars, feel compelled to hold, that among the Aryans and Semites religion cannot be traced back to ancestor-worship. Such evolutionists, Mr. Spencer observes, are not loyal to their theory.<sup>1</sup> The circumstance that they cannot find facts to sustain the theory, so far as these branches of the human race are concerned, ought not to be allowed to shake their faith. He considers his opinion as the proper tenet of agnostic orthodoxy.

The ingenious mode in which this theory is wrought out scarcely avails even to give it plausibility. The mythical sense attached to names of animals and things inanimate is not made a characteristic of an earlier stage of intelligence, but of stages of a later date. The transitions from point to point, especially from the lower to the higher types of religion, have an artificial aspect. The resort for evidence is not to history, the source whence, if anywhere, satisfactory evidence should be derived. The proofs are ethnographic. They consist of scraps of information respecting scattered tribes of savages, mostly tribes which now exist. In this way phenomena may, no doubt, be collected, which lend some support to the speculation about shadows, dreams, and ghosts. But a generalization respecting savage races cannot be safely made from miscellaneous data of this sort. That "the primitive man" was a savage is an assumption made at the outset. That he was unlearned, uncivilized, is one thing. That he was a fool, that he was not much above the brute, is an unverified assertion. Degeneracy is not only a possible fact, it is a fact which history and observation prove to have been actual in the case of certain peoples. The worship of the objects of nature, as far as can be ascertained, was not as a rule preceded by the worship of ancestors. It is a false analogy which Mr. Spencer adduces from the worship of saints in the Church. This practice did not precede the worship of God; primitive Christianity did not come after medieval.

It is a fatal difficulty in the way of the dream- and ghost-theory, as anything more than a partial and limited account of the genesis of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. p. 313.



religions, that it is not sustained, but is confuted, by historical investigation. The most prominent gods of India were, in the most ancient records, personified natural phenomena.<sup>1</sup> This is true of the sky-gods. The sky-father, or father-sky, is not only preserved in India, but also in the religions of Greece and Rome, where Zeus and Jupiter are transferred from his Indian name. There were ghost-demons and ghost-gods, but there were also invisible spirits which were distinguished from them, and deities under various categories having no relationship to them, either of descent or of transference.

In explaining the rise of religion, one would expect Mr. Spencer to say something of the great founders whose teaching has been so potent that eras are dated from them, and multitudes of men for ages have enrolled themselves among their disciples. One would think that Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, with whatever of peculiar illumination each possessed, should be counted among the powerful agencies concerned in developing the religions of mankind. But the evolution doctrine, in the phase of it which Mr. Spencer advocates, is cut off from doing justice to the influence of individuals. If religion had no deeper roots than are assigned to it in Mr. Spencer's theory, it could never have gained, much less have maintained, its hold upon men. The offspring, at every step, of error and delusion, it would have been short-lived. Mr. Spencer has presented valuable suggestions in the study of the origin of superstitions; but his view as a whole is a signal instance of the consequences of adhesion to a metaphysical theory, with only a partial survey of facts, and a failure to penetrate to the deeper principles of human nature. Even as an account of the genesis of certain superstitions, his theory needs to bring in as one element a sense of the supernatural, a yearning for a higher communion.

There is a wide interval between hypotheses of the character noticed above and the more elevated theory that religion arises from the perception of marks of design in nature. But even this falls short of being a satisfactory solution of the problem. Not to dwell on the facts, that the adaptations of nature impress different minds with unequal degrees of force, and that of themselves they fail to exhibit the infinitude and the moral attributes of deity, it is evident that the phenomena of religion require us to assume a profounder and more spiritual source to account for them. This must be found in deeper perceptions and aspirations within the human soul.

A capital defect in many of the hypotheses broached to account for the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Edward Hopkins, *India Old and New*, pp. 93 *seq.* This is a late as well as thorough exposition of the subject. Sir Henry Maine, who recognizes the prevalence of ancestor-worship, remarks that the theory attached to it "has been made to account for more than it will readily explain."—Sir Henry Maine, *Dissertations on Early Law and Custom*, vol. i. p. 69.

origin of religion is that they make it the fruit of an intellectual curiosity. It is regarded as being the product of an attempt to account for the world as it presents itself before the human intelligence. It is true that religion as a practical experience contains an ingredient of knowledge; yet it is a great mistake to regard the intellectual or scientific tendency as the main root of religious faith and devotion. Belief in God does not lie at the end of a path of inquiry of which the motive is the desire to explore the causes of things. It arises in the soul in a more spontaneous way, and in a form in which feeling plays a more prominent part. "Those who lay exclusive stress on the proof of the existence of God from the marks of design in the world, or from the necessity of supposing a first cause for all phenomena, overlook the fact that man learns to pray before he learns to reason; that he feels within him the consciousness of a supreme being and the instinct of worship before he can argue from effects to causes, or estimate the traces of wisdom and benevolence scattered through the creation."<sup>1</sup>

In connection with the foregoing observations a few additional remarks on the nature and origin of myths will not be out of place. A myth is, in form, a narrative, resembling in this respect the fable, parable, and allegory. But, unlike these, the idea or feeling from which the myth springs, and which, in a sense, it embodies, is not reflectively distinguished from the narrative, but rather is blended with it; the latter being, as it were, the native form in which the idea or sentiment spontaneously arises. Moreover, there is no consciousness on the part of those from whom the myth emanates that this product of their fancy and feeling is fictitious. The fable is a fictitious story, contrived to inculcate a moral. So the parable is a similitude framed for the express purpose of representing abstract truth to the imagination. Both fable and parable are the result of conscious invention. In both, the symbolical character of the narrative is distinctly recognized. From the myth, on the contrary, the element of deliberation is utterly absent. There is no questioning of its reality, no criticism or inquiry on the point, but the most simple, unreflecting faith. A like habit of feeling we find in children, who, delighting in narrative, improvise narrative. It is difficult for us to realize that childlike condition of mind which belonged to the early age of nations, when the creations of personifying sentiment and fancy were endued, in the faith of those from whom they sprang, with this unquestioned reality. It is almost as difficult as to reproduce those states of mind in which the fundamental peculiarities of language germinate: peculiarities in respect to which the philological explorer can only say that so mankind in their infancy looked upon things and actions. But there is no doubt as to the fact that the mythologies had this character. They are frequently,

<sup>1</sup> Mansel, *The Limits of Religious Thought*, p. 115.

—at least they were,—the pure creation of the mythopœic faculty; the incarnated faith and feeling of a primitive age, when scientific reflection had not yet set bounds to fancy. Science brought reflection. The attempt of Euemerus to clear early mythical tales of improbabilities and incongruities, and to find at the bottom a residuum of veritable history, and the attempts of both physical and moral philosophers to elicit from them an allegorical sense, are, one and all, the fruit of that scepticism which culture brought with it, and proceed upon a totally false view of the manner in which the myths originate. When these theories came up, the spell of the old faith was already broken. They are the efforts of rationalism to keep up some attachment to obsolete beliefs, or to save itself from conscious irreverence or popular displeasure. A state of mind had arisen wholly different from that which prevailed in the credulous, unreflecting, childlike period, when a common fear or faith embodied itself spontaneously in a fiction which was artlessly taken for fact.<sup>1</sup>

As we have implied, back of the authentic history of most nations lies a mythical era. And whenever the requisite conditions are present, the mythopœic instinct is active. The middle ages furnish a striking example. The fountain of sentiment and fancy in the uncultured

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Müller's *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* (1825) did much to open the way to an understanding of the true nature of the myth. The lectures of Schelling on the *Introduction to Mythology* (see Schelling's *Sämmtliche Werke*, II. Abth. i.) still retain their value as an able and elaborate discussion. Schelling examines at length the various theories which have been proposed to account for the origin of mythology, including those of Heyne, Hermann, Hume, Voss, Creuzer, and others. He disproves all the irreligious hypotheses and expounds in an interesting and profound way his own view, which is the same in spirit as that of Müller, although the latter, in the opinion of Schelling (p. 199), has not applied his theory to the first origination of the conceptions of the gods, but rather to their mythological doings—the mythological history. Schelling applauds the remarks of Coleridge on this subject, and says that he gives the latter a dispensation for the alleged free borrowing from his writings, in return for the single word which Coleridge has suggested as a proper description of myths. They are not *allegorical*, says Coleridge, but *tautegorical*. Schelling maintains that the primitive religion of mankind was “relative monotheism,” that is, the worship of one God who is not known in his *absolute* character. Thence polytheism arose, so that this one God was only the first of a series.

Among the expositions of the general subject, the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the first volume of Grote's *History of Greece* have not lost their interest. Mr. Grote shows the spontaneity that characterizes the origin of myths. In some important respects his view is defective. No theory is complete which omits to take account of the religious nature of man and his aspirations after communion with God.

nations of Europe divaricated, so to speak, into two channels,—the religious myth and the myth of chivalry. When we have eliminated from the immense mass of legendary history which forms the lives of the saints what is due to pious frauds (though these presuppose a ready faith), and what is historical, being due to morbid or otherwise extraordinary psychological states, and, if the reader so pleases, to miracle, there still remain a multitude of narratives involving supernatural events, which last have no foundation whatever in fact, but were yet thoroughly believed by those from whose fancy, enlivened and swayed by religious sentiment, they emanated.

#### NOTE 2 (p. 49)

Commenting on Paley's illustration of the watch, Huxley, in his *Lay Sermons*, writes as follows:—

"Suppose only that one had been able to show that the watch had not been made directly by any person, but that it was the result of the modification of another watch, which kept time but poorly; and that this again had proceeded from a structure which could hardly be called a watch at all, seeing that it had no figures on the dial and the hands were rudimentary; and that, going back and back, in time we came at last to a revolving barrel as the earliest traceable rudiment of the whole fabric. And imagine that all these changes had resulted, first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely, and, secondly, from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all these in other directions, and then it is obvious that the force of Paley's argument would be gone; for it would be demonstrated that an apparatus thoroughly well adapted to a particular purpose might be the result of a method of trial and error worked by unintelligent agents, as well as of the direct application of the means appropriate to that end."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the supposition of indefinite variation, which Huxley himself, as we shall see, is not prepared to affirm. Not to dwell on this point, we have, in the case supposed, "a revolving barrel" at one end of the line and a watch with its complex apparatus, by which it is fitted to record time, at the other. At the outset the barrel, with its inherent capacities, requires to be accounted for, in connection with that something which tends to one or another diverging path. The "surrounding world" is not outside of the system of things to which the production of the watch is due. The actual end evinces that "the means appropriate to that end took part in it." The passage in the text (p. 49) which is cited from Huxley exposes the fallacy of the foregoing paragraph. As to a tendency to indefinite variation, see above in this work, pp. 51 *seq.*

<sup>1</sup> *Lay Sermons*, pp. 330, 331.

In his interesting book on the crayfish, Huxley says:—

“Under one aspect the result of the search after the *rationale* of animal structure thus”—*i.e.* by the discovery in animals of arrangements by which results, of a kind similar to those which their [men's] own ingenuity effects through mechanical contrivances, are brought about—“is *Teleology*, or the doctrine of adaptation to purpose. Under another aspect it is *Physiology*.”<sup>1</sup>

“The body of the animal [the crayfish] may be regarded as a factory, provided with various pieces of machinery, by means of which,” etc., . . . “to which material particles converge . . . from which they are afterward expelled in new combinations” (p. 84).

One of the most remarkable differences between “the living factory and those which we construct” is that “it not only enlarges itself, but, as we have seen, it is capable of executing its own repairs to a very considerable extent.”<sup>2</sup>

“If all that we know concerning the purpose of a mechanism is derived from observation of the manner in which it acts, it is all one whether we say that the properties and the connections of its parts account for its actions, or that its structure is adapted to the performance of those actions.”<sup>3</sup>

If the terms are given their proper significance in the foregoing extracts, their purport is theistic.

Happily we have statements of Huxley which imply something above mechanical agencies, and, especially in later utterances, ethical propositions occur which are not consistent with agnostic denials that leave no room for freedom and responsibility. In the *Lay Sermons* is the comparison of life to a game of chess. “The calm, strong angel,” who is the player on the right side, “pays the highest strikes with overflowing generosity,” and “would rather lose than win.”<sup>4</sup> In the *Lecture on Descartes* it is said of those who hold that there is nothing in the world but matter and force and necessary laws, “I decline to follow them.” “Laws and moral precepts,” Huxley affirms, “are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process and reminding the individual of his duty to the community.” “Goodness or virtue demands self-restraint.” Still more significant in the right direction are expressions in the *Romanes Lecture*, one of Huxley's latest productions, where, speaking of the struggle of conscience with the cosmic forces, he remarks that “ethical nature, while born of cosmic nature, is necessarily at enmity with its parent.”<sup>5</sup>

The change from the position of Huxley, as expressed in the declaration that “it is utterly impossible” to prove “that anything whatever

<sup>1</sup> *The Crayfish*, etc., p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Lay Sermons, Addresses*, etc. (1871), p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> See *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (1894), pp. 81–85.



may not be the effect of a material and necessary cause," to the position that "our one certainty is the existence of the mental world," that necessity is not a physical fact but an "empty shadow of my own mind's throwing," shows a leaning no longer to materialism or "agnostic monism," but to spiritualism and a "duality in unity." It is not the former conception of man as a conscious automaton.<sup>1</sup>

### NOTE 3 (p. 50)

Darwin often found it difficult to avoid giving way to the evidences of design in nature. In the book on the *Fertilization of Orchids* is this passage (which is retained in the Revised Edition (1877), p. 351): "The more I study nature, the more I become impressed with ever increasing force with the conclusion that the contrivances and beautiful adaptations slowly acquired through each part occasionally varying in a slight degree but in many ways, with the preservation or natural selection of those variations which are beneficial to the organism under the complex and ever varying conditions of life, transcend in an incomparable degree the contrivances and adaptations which the most fertile imagination of the most imaginative man could suggest." When the Duke of Argyll, in conversation, referred to the wonderful contrivances for certain purposes in nature which Darwin had brought out in this and other works, Darwin said: "'Well, that often comes over me with overwhelming force; but at other times,'" and he shook his head vaguely, adding, "'it seems to go away.'" <sup>2</sup>

Darwin's scepticism respecting final causes is sometimes associated with the interpretation for which theology is in some degree responsible, that design in nature is solely for the end of being beneficial to man, or, at least, exclusively for some impression upon human observers. It is interesting to notice that in nature he was ready to believe in the wisdom of a contrivance which appeared unwise. Thus, in the first edition of the *Fertilization of Orchids* (1862), he says (p. 359): "It is an astonishing fact that self-fertilization should not have been an habitual occurrence. It apparently demonstrates to us that there must be something injurious in the process." Later (1877), in the corresponding paragraph (p. 293), he explains that the perplexity is removed by the discovery of the good effects that follow, "in most cases, cross-fertilization," and by the fact that he had proved that there is "something injurious" in the process of self-fertilization. In reference to the fruits of design in nature, on the whole, Darwin expresses the belief

<sup>1</sup> This change is lucidly demonstrated by Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii. pp. 210 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Good Words*, April, 1885; quoted in Darwin's *Life and Letters* (vol. i. p. 285).

that "all sentient beings have been formed so as to enjoy, as a general rule, happiness," and that "all sentient beings have been so developed, through natural selection, that pleasurable sensations serve as their habitual guides."<sup>1</sup> Another source of the scepticism which prevented the absolute rejection of what he terms "the intolerable thought that he [man] and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress," and the full acceptance of theism, despite "the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including in it his [man's] capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity," is the doubt, the "horrid doubt" as he calls it, which, to use his own words, always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the minds of lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy."<sup>2</sup>

The stumbling-block was the question whether a mind having such an origin is competent "to draw such grand conclusions." Of course, scepticism from this motive would, if carried out, sap the foundations of our beliefs generally. We simply follow the example of the sincere and noble man in referring to what he styles "the curious and lamentable loss of the higher æsthetic taste," "the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend." The delight which he had once felt in poetry and music and fine scenery fades out. "The loss of these tastes," he frankly says, "may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character."<sup>3</sup> Along with this loss, the religious sentiment, which had once been deep with "higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion," gradually ceased to be felt. He might be said, he adds, "to have become like a man who has become color-blind, if faith in God and such convictions and feeling were universal, like the perceptions of color."<sup>4</sup> It is fair to say that religious feelings are as prevalent, and have had as deep a root in the race, as are the class of feelings which Darwin styles æsthetic.

#### NOTE 4 (p. 56)

The ancient objection, which is based on the existence of evil, to the doctrine of theism concerning the attributes of God is restated by Hume. Either God wills to prevent evil, but cannot, in which case he is not omnipotent; or he can prevent evil, but will not, in which case he is not benevolent; or he neither can, nor wills, to prevent evil, in which case he is neither omnipotent nor benevolent. Theologians in times past dwelt on the benefits resulting from that double manifestation, of

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters*, pp. 279, 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 285.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

which moral evil furnishes the occasion, of both the justice and mercy of God. They have gone so far as to propound the doctrine that it is good that evil should exist, so far as it actually does exist. In this class of theologians belong the great names of Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin. Leibnitz, in his theodicy, defends the thesis that the freedom of the creaturely will and the consequent possibility of sin is the indispensable condition of the best moral system. But even Leibnitz, in his thesis that this is the best of all possible worlds, stops short of a distinct discrimination, without which the vindication of theism against the old objection is incomplete. The possible inconsistency of an absolute exclusion of evil from the best moral system by *the interposition of divine power* is one thing; the prevention of sin by *the right choices of those guilty of it* is another. The proposition, therefore, that in any instance it is good that wrong — instead of right — exists, *i.e.* that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, is unwarranted and untenable. The mystery that invests the moral system, regarded as universal, and the precise character of its final issues render adverse criticism presumptuous, especially in view of the truth that no moral being can fail of the true end of his being unless through his own persistent choice of evil instead of good. The problem of the existence and continuance of evil, moral and physical, is discussed in a sound and lucid manner by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, in *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (1892). Especially worthy of attention are his observations on moral and physical evil as “organically related in the mind of him who governs nature and man” (pp. 163 *seq.*), on a state of suffering, not one of probation, but of recovery from lapse, the last word and not Nature’s (pp. 166 *seq.*). The fact of evil, moral and physical, is not to be considered by itself, but as coupled with the divine purpose of redemption. So far as life is a probation, it is an incidental circumstance, not a chief end in the divine system.

#### NOTE 5 (p. 66)

“Pantheism, in one or another of its protean forms, is a way of thinking about the universe that has proved its influence over millions of minds. . . . It has governed the religious and philosophical thought of India for ages. Except in Palestine, with its intense Hebrew consciousness of a personal God, it has been characteristic of Asiatic thought. It is the religious philosophy of a moiety of the human race. In the West we find a pantheistic idea at work in different degrees of distinctness, — in the pre-Socratic schools of Greece, as in Parmenides; after Socrates, among the Stoics; then among the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, with Plotinus in ecstatic elevation, — a signal representative; again, in a striking form, in Scotus Erigena, who startles us with intrepid speculation in the darkness of the ninth century, the least philosophical

period in European history; yet again, with Bruno as its herald, after the Renaissance; and in the seventeenth century the speculative thought of Europe culminated in Spinoza's articulated pantheistic unity and necessity. The pantheistic conception was uncongenial to the spirit and methods of the eighteenth century, but it is at the root of much present religious and scientific speculation in Europe and America. It emerges in the superconscious intuition of Schelling: it has affinities with the absolute self-consciousness of the Hegelian: it is implied in the Absolute Will and the Unconscious Absolute of Schopenhauer and Hartmann in Germany, and in England it has affinity with the Unknowable Power behind phenomena of Herbert Spencer. . . . Pantheistic science, universal nescience, and theistic faith are three ideals now before Europe and the world, with some educated and more half-educated thoughts oscillating between the first and the second. Which of these three is the most reasonable final conception—the fittest for man in the full breadth of his physical and spiritual being?"<sup>1</sup>

## NOTE 6 (p. 82)

Mr. John Fiske, in his posthumous publication, *The Life Everlasting* (pp. 72 *seq.*), refers to the question, "Does correlation obtain between physical motions and conscious feelings?" He says that when he first asked Tyndal the question, he seemed to think that there must be some such correlation. "Herbert Spencer in his *First Principles* rather cautiously took the same direction and tried to show how a certain amount of motion might be transformable into a certain amount of feeling. . . . It is especially worthy of note that in the final edition of *First Principles*, published in the year 1900, and in Spencer's eighty-first, he goes very far toward withdrawing from his original position. In my *Cosmic Philosophy*, published in 1874, I maintained that to form the transformation of motion into feeling or feeling into motion is in the very nature of things impossible." "The mass of activities concentrated within our bodies . . . shows us a closed circle which is entirely physical" (p. 79).

## NOTE 7 (p. 83)

"Physical science is the discovery in nature of the principles and laws of reason pervading and regulating nature. If these principles had been in the reason of man, but not in nature, man could never have put them into nature, nor have caused nature to be regulated by them. If they had been in nature and not in the reason of man, man never could have discovered them nor formed any conception

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. C. Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, pp. 80, 81, 85.

of them. And this is only recognizing from a new point of view the synthesis of phenomenon and noumenon, which, in contrast to Kant's antithesis of them, I have already shown to be essential to all rational intelligence. An intelligible object is impossible without an intelligent subject. The noumena, or necessary principles and ideas of reason, are the unchanging forms in which reality is known by rational intelligence. If all that is known by man is phenomenal and not the real being, because known in relation to his mind, and the noumenon or real being is out of this relation and unknowable by man, then all that is known by any mind is phenomenal and unreal because known in relation to that mind. Thus we have the monstrous absurdity that noumena exist as pure objects out of all relation to all and every intelligent mind, that is, pure objects unintelligible to any mind and contrary to any and every principle of reason."

. . . "Truth has no significance except as some mind is its subject; for truth is the intellectual equivalent of reality. There can be no truth or law without a mind, as there can be no perception without a percipient and no thought without a thinker. We only delude ourselves by hypostasizing either perceptions or thoughts or truths as if they were substantial beings. Truths do not float loose about the universe, independent of mind. But in the development of man's rational constitution he finds himself having knowledge of truths which are universal and regulative of all his thinking which transcends his experience and condition all the reality which comes under his observation. There must be a supreme reason that is the subject and source of these truths and in that reason they must be the eternal and archetypal principles of all that begins to be."<sup>1</sup>

. . . "These principles cannot be peculiar to an individual. I know that they are not mine; I have not created them; I cannot change them nor set them aside. They must be principles of a reason above and beyond me, a reason that is eternal, universal, and supreme. Nor can they have originated in the evolution of the human race. If they were brought into human consciousness by the evolution of the primitive man through many generations, yet even while lying germinal and unconscious in his undeveloped constitution, they regulate man's development itself and direct it in its long progress to conscious rationality; they also regulate the corresponding development of nature in accordance with rational laws, and to the realization of rational principles and ends. They cannot, therefore, have originated with man, either the individual or the race, but must have existed before the evolution began, in a reason that is universal and supreme."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Samuel Harris, *Philosophical Basis of Theism*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *Ibid.*, p. 145.



"Even if our categories were purely subjective, it is impossible we should ever come to know it; and the idea of a world of things in themselves, apart from the world we know, may easily be shown to dissolve in contradictions. A world, real and independent of the individual's transient acts of knowledge, is not a world divorced from intelligence altogether. The fact, therefore, that a category lives subjectively in the act of the knowing mind, is no proof that the category does not at the same time truly express the nature of the reality known. It would be so only if we suppose the knowing subject to stand outside of the real universe altogether, and to come to inspect it from afar with mental spectacles of a foreign make. In that case, no doubt, the forms of his thought might be a distorting medium. But the case only requires to be stated plainly for its inherent absurdity to be seen. The knower is in the world which he comes to know, and the forms of his thought, so far from being an alien growth or an imported product, are themselves a function of the whole. As a French writer<sup>1</sup> puts it, "consciousness, so far from being outside reality, is the immediate presence of reality to itself and the inward unrolling of its riches." When this is once grasped, the idea of thought as a kind of necessary evil — Kant really treats it as such — ceases to have even a superficial plausibility. Unless we consider existence a bad joke, we have no option save tacitly to presuppose the harmony of the subjective function with the nature of the universe from which it springs."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTE 8 (p. 86)

The corner-stone of the system of Matthew Arnold, if system it could be called, is a conception of God which he not only regards as true, and evidently true, but even identifies with the biblical idea respecting this fundamental point. His theory may be termed an unscientific Pantheism; or perhaps, inasmuch as he does not profess to exhaust the conception of the Deity by his definition, an Agnostic Pantheism. In *Literature and Dogma*, with much, although it can scarcely be said with wearisome, iteration he explains that the equivalent of God is "the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." One would suppose that we have here a distinct expression of what, not lettered persons alone, but the world at large as well, mean by "cause," and designate by this name. But no! our author warns us that such notions belong to "metaphysics," and were quite foreign to the simple Israelites. Moreover, we ourselves run off into speculation the moment we talk of them. There is a Power, a Power exerting itself, or being exerted, a Power exerting itself for a particular end, or producing a definite effect; yet it must not be denominated a "cause."

<sup>1</sup> M. Fouillée, in his *L'Évolutionnisme des Idées-forces*.

<sup>2</sup> A. Seth, *Two Lectures on Theism*, pp. 18, 19.

Most people, whether simple or not, would be moved to ask what more precise description of cause and causal agency could be given than is involved in this favorite phrase of Arnold. In his second work, *God and the Bible*, he makes an elaborate effort to explain his remarkable definition of God, and the Israelites' conception of him, and to rule out the idea that under the "Power, not ourselves," there is included the notion of a *being*. In this latter work we are told that we must not think of "the Power that makes for righteousness" as inhering in a subject, — this is a misconception; it is anthropomorphic. Is all that is meant, then, that righteousness is observed, or is believed, to be followed by blessedness? Is there nothing but the bare fact of a succession of consequent to antecedent, after the manner of Hume's theory of causation? More than this is intended. There is an "operation" which yields this result. Things are so constituted that the supposed effect is *produced*. It is a "law of nature" like the law of gravitation. It is a "stream of tendency." When we speak, and when the Israelites spoke, of the "Power that makes for righteousness" as "eternal," all that is really meant is that righteousness always was and always will be attended with blessing. Arnold does not seem to be aware that in trying to fence off the conception of *being* as connected with the "Power, not ourselves," he does not succeed in escaping from what he styles "metaphysics." There is an "operation" left; there is "a perceived energy." The doctrine is simply this: that the world — things collectively taken — is such that a certain result, namely, blessedness, is sure to be worked out by the practice of righteousness. It falls short of being a dogmatic Pantheism by the added statement that we cannot "pretend to know the origin and composition of the Power" in question; we cannot say that it is a person or thing. In one place Arnold professes that he will not *deny* that "the Power" is "a conscious intelligence." But ordinarily he treats the conception that his "Power" is intelligent as pure anthropomorphism. If it be this, why admit it even as a possibility? If Arnold had pondered the subject more deeply, he might have perceived that the idea of personality, when connected with the conception of God, involves no philosophical difficulty. If by anthropomorphism is meant the limiting of God, or making him finite, no such consequence follows from personality.

It is interesting to inquire what becomes of devotion, of what men have always meant by prayer and communion with God, when God is made to be nothing more than a law of things, "a stream of tendency." In a foot-note Arnold gives the following answer: "All good and fruitful prayer, however men may describe it, is at bottom nothing else than an energy of aspiration towards the Eternal, *not ourselves*, that makes for righteousness, — of aspiration towards it and coöperation with it." The Eternal, it must be remembered, which is referred to by

the use of the pronoun *it*, signifies no being, — this is expressly disclaimed. “It,” “the Eternal,” is the fact that “righteousness was salvation,” and will “go on being salvation.” “It,” “the Eternal,” is the experienced and expected conjunction of these two things. What aspiration towards “it,” and co-operation with “it” denote, and with what propriety either of these or both together can be taken to signify *prayer*, in particular *supplication* which has always been held to be the prime essential in prayer, we are left to conjecture.

Considering the tendencies of the time in the direction of Pantheistic thought, it is not a matter for surprise that Arnold should bring forward the notion of an impersonal divinity. There is, however, some reason for astonishment that he should present his conception as the kernel of the Israelites’ faith, the living God of whom the Prophets spoke, and in praise of whose perfection the Psalms were composed. He admits, to be sure, that the Hebrews personified, and could not but personify, “the Stream of tendency.” Surely it is nothing short of an amazing error to regard the personal qualities which the Hebrews attached to God as an accidental and separable element in their faith. Take away the personality of God, and what basis would have remained for that living communion with him, that joy in him, which formed the life and soul of the Hebrew religion? Substitute the vague abstractions which make up this Pantheistic definition of deity for the designations of God in the Prophets and the Psalms, and the frigidity and almost ludicrous emptiness that remain, fairly exhibit the Hebrew religion as it would have been if its essential contents had accorded with our author’s idea of it. Not even an intuition is allowed them of this imaginary divinity, the connection of righteousness with happiness, but their knowledge of “it” is described as empirical; it is something found out by experience. “From all they could themselves make out, and from all that their fathers had told them,” they arrived at the conclusion that righteousness was the way to happiness. The truth is that in the Hebrew mind righteousness was infinitely more than a perceived condition of being happy. It was a requirement from without, from the Holy One. Their delight was in him. When they failed in righteousness, as fail they did, the only hope of happiness was through contrition and pardon from God.

#### NOTE 9 (p. 93)

To illustrate adequately, with the emotions connected with it, the power of self-accusation, and to show its prevalence, would require a copious volume. Poetry and the drama, as well as biographical literature, offer endless materials. This is true if every departure from records marked by soundness and sanity were to be avoided. Place may be given to a single instance. Robert Burns, under date of January, 1794,

having given way, under temptation, to unworthy impulses of sensual feeling, expresses the self-abasement that follows in the words: "Regret! Remorse! Shame! Ye three hell-hounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels," etc. Referring to the same occurrence in a letter to another person, under date of February 25, 1794, he writes: "Canst thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her?" In another paragraph of the same letter these lines occur — "senses of the mind, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities — an all-powerful and equally beneficent God, and a world to come, beyond death and the grave." These lines also follow: "I know of some who laugh at religion. . . . Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion any more than I would for the want of a musical ear." — *The Works of Burns*, Douglas's ed., 1877-1879, vol. vi. pp. 65, 118.

#### NOTE 10 (p. 167)

The following extracts from well-known teachers of philosophy exhibit the trend of psychical science.

"The one fundamental reality, the actual Being whose characteristics are recognized by the categories, whose work is both nature considered as the system of material things and also all the spirits of men considered in their historical development, is the Absolute Self. And the innermost essence of such an Absolute Self is Spirit. From Spirit, then, come nature and all spirits; and in dependence on this Spirit they live and develop."<sup>1</sup>

The essential and real nature of matter, in the full significance of the word "Reality," is to be known only in terms of the Life of the Spirit. That system of interrelated beings which constitutes the world as known to man is the "manifestation under the present conditions of space and time, of an infinite and eternal spirit."<sup>2</sup>

"The various categories whereby realistic thought constructs reality proved to be the bare forms of intelligence, projected beyond intelligence and thereby made meaningless. Being, causality, unity, identity, turned out to be unintelligible and impossible apart from intelligence. It finally appeared that the world of things can be defined and understood only as we give up the notion of an extra-mental reality altogether and make the entire world a thought-world; that is, a world that exists only through and in relation to intelligence. Mind is the only ontological reality. Ideas have only a conceptual reality. Ideas energized by

<sup>1</sup> Professor George T. Ladd, *A Theory of Reality*, pp. 458, 459.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.



will have phenomenal reality. Besides these realities there is no other." <sup>1</sup>

"Historically, it might be described as Kantianized Berkeleianism. In itself it might be called phenomenalism, as indicating that the outer world has only phenomenal reality. It might also be called objective idealism, as emphasizing the independence of the object of individual subjectivity. It is idealism as denying all extra-mental existence and making the world of objective experience a thought-world which would have neither meaning nor possibility apart from intelligence. And this is the conception to which speculative thought is fast coming. . . . In this view . . . the mechanical and materialistic view finds a recognition of its phenomenal truth, together with an escape from its essential error." <sup>2</sup>

"From our own point of view the natural has its source and abiding cause in the fundamental reality, which is living will and intelligence; and physical nature is throughout only the form and product of its immanent and ceaseless causality. The question of miracle, then, is not a question of natural *versus* supernatural, nor a question of causality, but only a question of the phenomenal relations of the event in question. . . . The miracle could only be viewed as an event arriving apart from the accustomed order and defying reduction to rule." <sup>3</sup>

"The habit of looking upon nature as a system of necessary causality easily leads to the conception that all phenomena are to be explained within the system itself. There must be no interferences or interruptions from without under penalty of the speculator's displeasure." <sup>4</sup>

"The only definition of nature which criticism will allow is, the sum-total and system of phenomena which are subject to law. The definition of physical nature is, the sum-total of spatial phenomena and their laws. This nature is throughout effect, and contains no causation and no necessity in it. . . . But when nature as cause is posited as some blind agent or agents, it represents only bad metaphysics." <sup>5</sup>

The *Contentio Veritatis*, etc. (London, 1902), in the opening chapter (by Rev. N. Rashdall) on "The Ultimate Basis of Theism," maintains the proposition that "things cannot be conceived of as existing by themselves," that "they exist only for mind" and cannot exist "apart from mind," but they exist "not for our minds only; yet that things have an objective as well as subjective being, and that, therefore, Universal or Divine Mind must have existed; that the argument from causality shows God as *willing* and not merely *thinking* the universe.

Mr. Rashdall holds that "psychical research" may hereafter extend farther than has yet been the fact the limits of what may be regarded as possible in the category of events which have been denominated miracles, without any further violation of the laws of nature than is implied

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bowne, *Metaphysics*, pp. 422, 423.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.



in the normal action of the human will. "But," it is added, "there is no probability that it will ever reverse the verdict which has been passed 'on some other events recorded in the Old and New Testaments.'"

#### NOTE II (p. 172)

The late Professor Huxley, in his *Lay Sermons* and in his *Controversial Papers*, set forth his philosophical opinions. The clever invention of the term "Agnosticism" is due to him. In these writings he expressed the opinion that what we call mind is a collection or series of sensations standing in certain relations to each other, and that this is all we know about it. That there is a thinking agent, such as men generally suppose to exist when they use the word *I*, there is no proof. There is a uniformity of succession in the sensations which constitute the soul, as far as we know anything of it or have any reason to assert anything of it; but there is no freedom of choice, in the sense that the circumstances, internal and external, being the same, any different determination of the will from that which actually takes place is possible. "What we call the operations of the mind," he says, "are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity." But the brain, like everything else that is alive, is developed from protoplasm, the primitive form of living matter. Huxley avows that we have no explanation of the way in which life may have originated from inorganic matter, but he indicates no doubt that it had this origin. The reader would naturally say that we have here a scheme of bald materialism. But this imputation is repudiated. He insists that we have no knowledge of anything but the heap of sensations, impressions, feeling, — or by whatever name they may be called. There may be a real something without, which is the cause of all our impressions. In that case, sensations are the symbols of that unknown something. This conclusion Huxley favors, although he is at pains to declare that idealism is unassailable by any means of disproof within the limits of positive knowledge. The inconvenience is attached to this last alternative, that it really involves the giving up by the idealist of belief in anybody, as well as anything, outside of himself. It involves the doctrine which metaphysicians style *solipsism*. Professor Huxley affirms that "our mental conditions are simply the symbols in consciousness of the changes that take place automatically in the organism," and that "we are conscious automata." Yet in another place he is equally sure that "our one certainty is the existence of the mental world;" the existence of "force" and "matter" is nothing more than "a highly probable hypothesis."<sup>1</sup> But the "something" of which the brain is a product is

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Essays*, vol. ix. p. 130. For a searching analysis of Huxley's conception of psycho-parallelism, or conscious automatism, see Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii. p. 216. The oscillation of Huxley between a (practical) materialism and solipsism is lucidly exposed.

unintelligent; and when the brain dissolves, there is nothing to prove that the phenomena of intelligence continue. There is no proof that the soul, that is, the series of sensations, does not come to an end. As to the existence of a personal God, this is one of the propositions which are incapable of being established. "In respect to the existence and attributes of the soul, as of those of the Deity," says Professor Huxley, "logic is powerless and reason silent." As regards the attributes of God,—justice, benevolence, and the like,—he indicates no dissent from the "searching critical negation" of Hume. If there be a God, he thinks it demonstrable that God must be "the cause of all evil as well as all good,"—a conclusion which would follow, to be sure, from the tenet that man is not a personal agent, spontaneously and freely originating his voluntary actions, but is no proper adjunct of the opposite doctrine.

In his book on Hume, Professor Huxley refers to the doctrines and arguments of Bishop Butler. "The solid sense of Butler," he says, "left the Deism of the Freethinkers not a leg to stand upon." But Hume, he intimates, has been successful where they failed. Hume does not concede what the Deists admitted. In the passage which Professor Huxley cites from Hume's *Inquiry* there is no denial of a supreme governor or of divine providence. Hume's position, or the idea which he puts into the mouth of the Epicurean, is that although experience shows that a virtuous course of life is attended with happiness, and a vicious course of life with misery, yet this experience affords not the least ground for expecting consequences of a like kind after life is over. "Every argument," says Hume, "deduced from causes to effects, must of necessity be a gross sophism, since it is impossible for you to know anything of the cause but what you have antecedently not inferred, but described to the full, in the effect." This sweeping statement rests on the baldest empiricism. By parity of reasoning, if we cannot go an inch beyond what we have seen, we should have to say of a man who in a long course of conduct had acted justly, that we cannot infer in him the existence of an established disposition to conform to the dictates of justice in the future. However, Hume illogically admits that an expectation of this character is valid as far as "the ordinary course of events is concerned." His real ground, although it is not openly stated, is that we have no proof of a future state of being; and if he does not reject the belief in a supreme governor, and in divine providence as active in the present world, his silence on this point springs merely from civility or reserve. But it is only necessary to step out of the prison of a narrow empiricism to find in the allotments of justice here evidence enough to show that there is a just God, and thus to warrant the presumption, if not to justify the full belief, that there is a future life and a completion there of a system begun here, but not carried to completion. It is true that Butler's arguments in the *Analogy* are aimed at Deism, and not at Atheism, or

Scepticism as to the essentials of natural religion. But it is also true that his arguments go farther and effect more than he directly intended. This he himself sees and asserts. Whoever will candidly read his chapters on Natural Government and Moral Government will find in them evidence which points to the conclusion that there is a God, that he is just, and that there is a probability of a continuance of the system of rewards and punishments in a life beyond this.

Any one who saw the Cologne Cathedral as it was fifty years ago, half built and with a crane in the unfinished tower, would have had no doubt as to the plan of the structure or the design that had existed to realize it, sooner or later. What would have been said of an onlooker who should have denied that there was any evidence of a thought or an intention in the contriver of the edifice to do anything more than could then and there be seen?

#### NOTE 12 (p. 231)

The use of the "we" begins with Paul's leaving Troas (xvi. 11), and continues in the account of his stay at Philippi. It is resumed on the return of Paul to Philippi (xx. 5-15), thus raising the presumption that the author of these passages had in the interval tarried at that place. The remaining passages in which this peculiarity appears are xxi. 1-18, xxvii. 1-xxviii. 17. Now, what is the explanation of this phenomenon? Only two hypotheses are open to discussion among those who accept the ecclesiastical tradition and ascribe the book to Luke. The first is the ancient and ordinary view that Luke was himself, in these places, the attendant of Paul. The second is the hypothesis of Schleiermacher, variously modified by other writers, that Luke here introduces, without formal notice, a document emanating, as they commonly suppose, from Timothy, or, as some have thought, from Silas, and others from Titus. The second form of the hypothesis, that Silas wrote the passages in question, is supported by no argument worthy of attention, and is fully refuted by the circumstance that, in connection with at least one of the passages (see Acts xvi. 19-25), Silas is mentioned in the third person. But the theory that Timothy is the author of these passages, although it was adopted by so able and candid a writer as Bleek, has been, as we believe, effectually disproved.<sup>1</sup> This theory does not, to be sure, militate against the general credibility of the book, or the fact of its being composed by Luke. But how stands the evidence in regard to it? We read (in Acts xx. 4, 5): "And there accompanied him [Paul] into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, *and Timotheus*; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. *These* going before tarried *for us* at Troas." If,

<sup>1</sup> The examination of the "Timothy-hypothesis" by Lekebusch (s. 140-167) is one of the finest parts of his excellent treatise.

under the term "these," all who are named before are referred to, — which is the most natural interpretation,<sup>1</sup> — the so-called Timothy-hypothesis falls to the ground. In connection with this piece of evidence, it deserves remark that the absence of all detail — the summary style of the narrative — in passages directly connected with those under consideration, and covering a portion of Paul's career in which Timothy bore an equal part, is against the supposition that Luke had at his command a diary of this apostolic helper. The opinion that Titus wrote the passages in question lacks definite support. Against it is the circumstance that there is no mention of Titus in the epistles of Paul written during his first imprisonment, whereas the author of these passages accompanied the apostle to Rome. The decisive argument against each of these several hypotheses is the misconception of the general structure and character of the book which they imply. Were it true that the book presents the appearance of being a compilation of documents imperfectly fused or combined, — left in a good degree in their original state, — it might not unreasonably be assumed that the author had taken up a document from another's pen, leaving in it the pronominal feature which we are discussing. This idea of the book was a part of Schleiermacher's theory. But a more thorough examination of the Acts has made it clear that, from whatever sources the author draws his information, it is one production, coherent in plan, its different parts connected by references forward and backward, and flowing from a single pen. If Luke here took up into his work a document from another hand, he could not have given it the harmony with his own style which it exhibits, without remoulding its form and phraseology *to such an extent as renders it impossible to suppose the retention of the "we" to be artless or accidental*. Memoranda from another source, if Luke had such, were *rewritten by him*; but this leaves the retaining of the "we," with no explanation, an insoluble fact. We infer, then, with confidence, that Luke, in these passages, *professes* to speak in his own person.<sup>2</sup> This fact Zeller and other acute Tübingen critics admitted; and their conclusion was, that whilst the author of the Acts, whom they conceived of as writing in the second century, used a previously written document, he intentionally left the "we" as it stood, — although the document in other parts was materially wrought over by him, — in order to produce the false impression that he was the contemporary and associate of Paul. This refined fraud is attributed,

<sup>1</sup> See Meyer, *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> There remains, to be sure, the question why Luke does not expressly state the fact of his joining Paul, but leaves it to be gathered from this use of the pronoun. But this book was written for a private individual. Of the circumstances of Luke's companionship with Paul, Theophilus may have known something before.



and it is thought necessary to attribute, to the author of the Acts. But if we are not prepared to sanction this imputation, the reasonable alternative is to accept the testimony of the author concerning himself; that is, to ascribe his work to a contemporary and companion of the apostle Paul.

It is true that in both of his writings, Luke was instructed in part by written sources as well as by verbal communications. An instance of the former is the opening chapters of the Gospel, which relate to the birth and childhood of Jesus, and contain traces of the Hebraic diction of a document used in their composition. But the author of these books affords abundant evidence of his capacity as a writer. The dedication which forms the prologue of the Gospel is marked by an elegance in its structure and phraseology which has elicited the admiration of classical scholars who are most competent judges of its linguistic merit. The "we" passages in the Acts are by the same author. This fact excludes the theory that they are *carelessly* taken up from another source in the way which this supposition implies.

#### NOTE 13 (p. 252)

A. Resch, *Aussercanonische Paralleltexte zu den Evang.*, Heft 4; *Paralleltexte zu Johannes* (1896), pp. 2-4. Resch points out, as he thinks, in the liturgy, in the *Didache* (in cc. ix. x.), not less than seventeen allusions to John's Gospel. When these are sifted by a severe criticism there remain proofs not easily to be set aside in the style of the liturgy, and in a number of allusions in it to be connected with the gospel rather than with a tradition. The conclusion of Resch is that the gospel must have contained in itself before the end of the first century the substratum of the earliest liturgical product of primitive Christianity (p. 4).

Resch considers that the earliest reference to the gospel, the name of John being used, is given in the Coptic-Gnostic work, codex Bruce (ed. Schmidt), A.D. 160 (Resch, p. 24). The list of references which Resch finds in Justin contains, when strictly but fairly revised, much material to be approved. But it is needless at present to argue for the use of John by Justin. It is conceded. The time has gone by when, to use the words of Professor J. H. Thayer, one of "the framers of hypotheses" was "driven to say that the doctrine of John was borrowed from Justin. Sydney Smith . . . had a rural neighbor who was persuaded that the hundred and fourth Psalm was a plagiarism upon a devotional composition of his own."—*The Biblical World*, vol. xix., No. 4, April, 1902, p. 254.

#### NOTE 14 (p. 254)

After explaining that the accounts which constituted the materials at the basis of the first three Gospels did not originate in any design



to give a connected account of the life or the public ministry of Christ as a whole, Neander proceeds as follows: "John's Gospel, the only consecutive account of the ministry of Christ, could have proceeded from none other than the beloved disciple on whose soul the image of Christ had made the deepest impress. It could not have emanated from the soul of any man of the second century. We cannot even imagine any man of that century so little affected by the controversies (*Gegensätze*), and so far exalted above them. Not in an age when everything was broken up into antagonisms, from which not even the attempts at mediation could escape, was it possible for such a product to arise, which bears in it no trace either of the stamp of the religious materialism or anthropomorphism or the one-sided intellectualism which characterized that period. How mighty the man must have been in relation to a time so far beneath him who could bring forth from his own mind such an image of Christ! And this man, too, in a time which had so few superior minds, remained in the deepest obscurity! Such an one, who was competent and must have felt himself called to accomplish the highest achievement of his time if he had come out openly and unmasked, must make use of so pitiful an artifice in order to smuggle in his ideas! . . . Strange that a man who wanted to secure faith in his inventions should, in the chronology and topography of the life of Christ, give the lie to the universal tradition of the church of his time instead of conforming to it!"<sup>1</sup>

## NOTE 15 (p. 269)

The suggestion of Haupt relative to the occasional grouping by the fourth Evangelist, of kindred sayings of Jesus on different occasions, after the manner of Matthew, deserves much more attention than it has received from those who think that they find instances of a broken connection in the Evangelist's reports. If such a disconnection could be shown, this would be a not improbable solution of the difficulty. This is favored in the essay by Rev. N. L. Wild in the *Contentio Veritatis*, on "The Teaching of Christ" (pp. 105-167). After saying that the fourth Evangelist has made a careful choice among the facts of a wide tradition, he adds: "There would seem to be everywhere a conscious grouping of the sayings according to subject-matter rather than to circumstance. The fragmentary and occasional utterances have been fused by memory and reflection with the long discourse," etc. (p. 156). This hypothesis is here carried much farther than it is applied by Haupt.

One of the ablest of modern theologians, Rothe, conceived that his own mode of conceiving of the Trinity had support from a supposed lack of harmony between the expressions of Jesus respecting his unity with God, recorded in John's Gospel, and certain expressions of the Evangelist himself on the same subject. As bold in speculation as he was devout in faith and piety, Rothe broached the opinion that the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Leben Jesu* (ed. 5), p. 10, Engl. transl. of ed. 4, p. 6 (revised).

ception of a preëxistent divine hypostasis was an idea of the apostle John, and also of the apostle Paul, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was suggested to them in a current widespread Jewish theological conception, and secured to them a natural solution of the mystery of the unity of divinity and humanity in Jesus, in which they fervently believed!<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that theories like these referred to above have no claim to credence unless the exegetical premises on which they rest are fully verified.

#### NOTE 16 (p. 272)

"Peter," the name attached, from its significance, to the disciple "Simon," is the name by which, more and more, Simon came to be designated in the churches as we see from the New Testament writings. St. Paul (as in Gal. ii.) speaks of him as "Peter," using also its Hebrew equivalent, "Cephas." If there is truth in the suggestion that the phrase, "whom Jesus loved," is probably the rendering of a single Aramaic word, signifying "beloved" or something equivalent, and was applied by Jesus to John, and became a more or less usual designation of the apostle, the use of it in the fourth Gospel would have an additional explanation.

#### NOTE 17 (p. 280)

See, in John ii. 12, Dr. Dwight's note in the translation of Godet's *Commentary*. The passage in John reads, "After this he [Jesus] went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brother, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days." The bare fact of this visit is stated with no assigning of a motive for it, or of anything that occurred. To make anything out of this statement but a historical recollection is a desperate undertaking.

#### NOTE 18 (p. 289)

A learned and fair-minded scholar wrote thus, in the closing period of his life, in a letter: "On the genuineness of John my opinion remains unchanged. Many of the embarrassments I think (are greatly aggravated by) misconception as to the nature of the gospels in general, and of that one in particular, and the consequent application to it of false historical requirements which it was not intended to meet."—Professor J. Henry Thayer, in *The Biblical World*, vol. xix., No. 4, April, 1902.

#### NOTE 19 (p. 305)

Yet the tradition underlying the synoptic Gospels is inadequate to account for the fulness with which the teaching of Christ's divinity was

<sup>1</sup> Rothe's exposition of his theory is presented at length in his *Dogmatik*, Th. i., especially on pp. 106 seq.

developed in the apostolic church. The words of Weizsäcker (in 1864) are still worth citing: "The strong apostolic faith which has assured to Christianity its permanent existence in the world can be explained only on the assumption that the life of Jesus stood on such a lofty plane as the fourth Gospel permits us to discern. We have every reason to suppose that this derivation of the belief in the higher nature of Jesus, from his own words and deeds, sprang from a historical conviction of the writer himself. For this delineation of Jesus exactly corresponds to the mighty effect produced by the whole personality, and is necessary in order to explain how the faith in this person so soon became the essence of Christianity."<sup>1</sup>—*American Journal of Theology*, vol. ii., No. 1, January, 1898.

"Although the first three gospels contain no explicit assertion of the doctrine, the personage they portray forbids his classification with ordinary men, and leaves so unique and exalted a conception of his relation to the Father, that the explicit declarations of the fourth Gospel awaken no surprise in the ordinary reader. In fact, the old assertion of the critics, that the fourth Gospel presents a very different personage from the Messiah of the first three, is now, I believe, generally abandoned."—Letter of Professor J. Henry Thayer, *Biblical World*, vol. xix., No. 4, April, 1902.

#### NOTE 20 (p. 320)

The school of which Strauss was the most prominent representative supported their destructive criticism by sophistical reasoning. The aim was to convict the Gospels of inconsistency and contradiction to such an extent as to make them untrustworthy, and to render the life of Jesus, beyond the most general outlines, utterly obscure and uncertain. One of the Evangelists was used to disprove the statement of another; and the second, in turn, was impeached on the authority of the first. The first *Life of Christ* by Strauss, his principal work, is full of examples of this circular reasoning. But, besides this transparent vice of logic, in the treatment of the details of the history, there was a flagitious disregard of the sound and acknowledged principles of historical criticism. Variations, however innocent, were magnified into an irreconcilable discordance. Peculiarities in the narratives, such as occur in the most authentic historical writers, were imputed by Baur and his followers to contrivance. At the present time, the ascription of discreditable motives to the New Testament historians is decidedly less common. But fallacious reasoning from diversities in their narrations is far from being unusual. All who pursue historical studies, all who take notice of testimony in courts, or even of ordinary conversation, know how many occasions there are for varying the form of a narrative, besides a want

<sup>1</sup> *Untersuchung*, pp. 287 seq.

of knowledge, or of honesty in the narrator. The desire of brevity leads to the modification of the features of a transaction in the report of it. To give prominence to one element, or aspect, of the story, the order of circumstances may be changed. For the sake of making an event intelligible to a particular person, or class, or to give graphic force to the account of it, something may have to be added or subtracted. Thus a diversity of form may be produced, which yet involves no error. An unknown circumstance may be the missing link which unites testimony that is apparently discordant. The justice of these remarks, and the fallacy of the method of criticism referred to, are best illustrated by examples drawn from ordinary history. As one instance, we may refer to two passages, in the last volume of President John Adams's Letters, which were written with an interval of little more than a year between them:—

(A) To William Tudor

QUINCY, 5 June, 1817.

Mr. Otis, soon after my earliest acquaintance with him, lent me a summary of Greek Prosody, of his own collection and composition, a work of profound learning and great labor. I had it six months in my possession before I returned it. Since my return from Europe, I asked his daughter whether she had found that work among her father's manuscripts. She answered with a countenance of woe that you may more easily imagine that I can describe, that "she had not a line from her father's pen; that he had spent much time, and taken great pains to collect together all his letters and other papers, and in one of his unhappy moments, committed them all to the flames." I have used her own expressions.

(B) To H. Niles

QUINCY, 14 June, 1818.

After my return from Europe, I asked his daughter whether she had found among her father's manuscripts a treatise on Greek Prosody. With hands and eyes uplifted, in a paroxysm of grief, she cried, "Oh! sir, I have not a line from my father's pen. I have not even his name in his own handwriting." When she was a little calmed, I asked her, "Who has his papers? where are they?" She answered, "They are no more. In one of those unhappy dispositions of mind which distressed him after his great misfortune, and a little before his death, he collected all his papers and pamphlets, and committed them to the flames. He was several days employed in it."

Suppose that these two narratives, instead of being from the pen of a modern writer, had been found in the Gospels by a critic of a familiar type, the first of them being in one Evangelist, and the second in another. What a field for suspicion! What confident hypotheses should we have for the explanation of the phenomena in question! We should be told that document B is a product of exaggeration, founded on the simple story in A. The "countenance of woe," in A, is turned into "eyes uplifted" and a "paroxysm of grief," in B. The reply of the daughter is broken up into separate parts for "dramatic effect." The circumstance that "pamphlets" as well as "letters" and "papers" are men-



tioned among the things destroyed, is an addition from the fancy of the second writer, or is an accretion in "the second evangelical tradition." The general view as to the relation of the two documents is confirmed beyond a question by the fact that the destruction of the papers is said in A to have been accomplished in "one of his unhappy moments," while B makes it the work of "several days." A makes the collection of these materials for the flames occupy a prolonged period; B thinks that the impression would be more startling to represent the conflagration itself as long in duration. But why does B omit the statement that the book of *Proserpida* had been "six months" in the hands of the writer at a previous time? Obviously, because the disappointment at its destruction would be softened by the circumstance that Mr. Adams had already perused the work; and this would clash with the intention of the writer of B, who will paint the calamity in the liveliest colors. We appeal to any one who is conversant with modern critical works upon the Gospels, if this representation is not a fair parody of the procedure of many of them in their handling of these writings. And these conclusions are often announced with the assurance proper to mathematical certainty. As it happens, in the present case, we know that both documents are from one hand, the hand of a writer of scrupulous veracity. The same fact is narrated in the one briefly, in the other more in detail. Both, considering the compass of each, and the end for which they were written, are accurate. When, in the first letter, Mr. Adams says that he has "used her own expressions," he does not mean to be understood as giving everything that she said, or the precise order in which her answers were spoken.

There is a familiar story of the way in which Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have been impressed with the uncertainty of historic narratives. This feeling was inspired by the contradictory accounts which he heard from eye-witnesses of a fracas which he had himself seen from his window in the Tower. The difficulty of getting at the exact truth as to minor circumstances was naturally inferred. Whether the story be true or not, there is likewise another important custom that may be suggested by it to the historical student. Seemingly discordant details may spring from the varying perspective of different reporters, the effect of which the reader or hearer is often not competent to weigh.

Let the reader take up any important event in ancient or modern history, which has been described by several writers, even in cases when they were eye-witnesses, and not unobservant or dishonest, and he will find variations in matters of detail, which, to a great extent at least, might disappear, were the whole transaction presented to our view, and which, in any event, do not affect the substance of the narrative.

The death of *Cicero* is described by *Plutarch* and *Appian*, and is noticed also by *Dion Cassius*, *Livy*, and others. We set in parallel columns the two principal accounts:—



*Plutarch, Vita Ciceronis*

But in the meantime the assassins were come with a band of soldiers, Herennius a centurion, and Popilius [Lænas] a tribune whom Cicero had formerly defended when prosecuted for the murder of his father. Finding the doors shut, they broke them open, and Cicero not appearing, and those within saying they knew not where he was, it is stated that a youth, who had been educated by Cicero in the liberal arts and sciences, an emancipated slave of his brother Quintus, Philologus by name, informed the tribune that the litter was on its way to the sea through the close and shady walks. The tribune, taking a few with him, ran to the place where he was to come out. And Cicero, perceiving Herennius running in the walks, commanded his servants to set down the litter; and stroking his chin, as he used to do, with his left hand, he looked steadfastly upon his murderers, his person covered with dust, his beard and hair untrimmed, and his face worn with troubles. So that the greatest part of those that stood by covered their faces whilst Herennius slew him. And thus was he murdered, stretching forth his neck out of the litter, being now in his sixty-fourth year. Herennius cut off his head, and, by Antony's command, his hands also, by which the Philippics were written; for so Cicero styled those orations he wrote against Antony, and so they are called to this day.

*Appian, de Bellis Civ. IV. xix. xx*

While now many people ran about here and there, inquiring if Cicero had been seen anywhere, and some, out of good-will and compassion for him, said: "He has already sailed and is out upon the sea," a shoemaker, a client of Clodius, the most bitter enemy of Cicero, pointed out the right way to Lænas, the centurion, who had a few soldiers with him. Lænas hurried after, and, at the sight of the servants, whom he saw to be of a greater number than his following, and prepared for resistance, made use of a soldier's stratagem, and called out: Centurions who are behind, hasten forward! By this means the servants, under the idea that more were coming, were struck with a panic (*καταπλάγησαν*). And Lænas, although he had once gained a cause by the aid of Cicero, dragging his head out of the litter severed it from the body, or rather, from want of skill, sawed it off, since he struck the neck three times. At the same time he cut off the hand with which Cicero had written those speeches against Antony as a tyrant, to which, after the example of Demosthenes, he gave the name of Philippics.

It will be observed that Plutarch states that it was a freedman of Quintus, named Philologus, who told the pursuers of Cicero what path he had taken. Appian, on the other hand, says that it was a shoemaker, a client of Claudius. Plutarch (with whom Livy agrees) says that Cicero stretched his head out of the litter; Appian says that Lænas pulled it out. Plutarch says that Herennius cut off the head; Appian that it was done by Lænas, awkwardly, in three blows — by sawing rather than cutting. Plutarch says that his hands were cut off, and Livy that

the head was fastened to the rostrum between the two hands. Appian's statement is, that the hand was cut off which had written the Philippics, — that is, the right hand. Appian states that the servants of Cicero were dismayed by the shout of Lænas, which implied the presence of a strong force near. But Plutarch informs us that Cicero directed the litter to be set down; and Livy adds to this that he commanded the bearers of it to make no resistance.<sup>1</sup> Dion states not only that it was Lænas who cut off the head, but that he kept the skull near to a garlanded image of himself, in order that he might have the credit of the deed.<sup>2</sup>

That memorable scene in English history when Oliver Cromwell dispersed the Long Parliament, and locked the door, has been described by Whitelocke, Algernon Sidney, and Ludlow, the two former of whom were present, and the last, who was in Ireland, derived his information from eye-witnesses. There are various points of difference in these three narrations. For instance, Whitelocke says that Cromwell led a file of musketeers in with him, leaving the rest at the door and in the lobby. Ludlow says nothing of the introduction of the soldiers into the room where the house was sitting, until they were summoned in by Cromwell's order. Whitelocke says that Col. Harrison rose and took the speaker by the arm; Ludlow that he put his hand within the speaker's hand, and in this way assisted him out of the chair. These and other differences are enough to furnish a hostile critic with the means for a plausible attack upon the credibility, if not of the main event, of the leading circumstances attending the event. Yet, whoever will recur to Mr. Carlyle's or Mr. John Forster's description, will see that we are driven to no such unsatisfactory conclusion.

Nothing can be more unwarrantable and fallacious than to raise doubts respecting a whole transaction on account of real or seeming discrepancies that relate to a single feature of it. It is a controverted question who commanded the American forces at Bunker Hill. Some have said that it was Prescott, others have said that it was Putnam. Whatever the truth may be, whether it was the one, or the other, or neither, or both, this discrepancy in contemporary or later accounts proves nothing against the reality of that occurrence which we call the Battle of Bunker Hill. The preliminaries and main events of that engagement have been correctly reported. The difference in the writers as to who was the commander may, perhaps, be adjusted, without the ascription of an actual error to any of the authorities on which we depend for our knowledge of the event. Yet diversities of no more significance have often been made a pretext for impeaching

<sup>1</sup> "Satis constat . . . ipsum deponi lecticam et quietos pati quod fors iniqua cogeret jussisse." *Fragment. ad lib. cxx., ap. Seneca, Suasoria, vii.*

<sup>2</sup> *Hist.*, xlvii. 10.

the trustworthiness of the Gospel historians, and denying the reality of the various transactions which they record.

There is thus a proper sphere for the Harmonist. A consecutive narrative, and one as complete as the materials at our command render it possible to construct, of the life of Jesus must be founded on a comparison of the four Gospels; just as a history of the Apostolic Age must rest upon the foundation of the book of Acts and the Epistles studied in connection with it. The prejudice against the Harmonists as a class, which prevails widely and is shared by not a few scholars who have no disposition to reject the supernatural elements of the evangelical history, has its origin in extravagances of Harmonistic writers. An extravagant conception of the nature and extent of inspiration as related to the historical writings of the New Testament has characterized this school. The inspiration of the Evangelists, instead of having its effect in an elevation of mind and in spiritual insight, has been thought to secure an impeccability of memory, — to operate, like the demon of Socrates, in a negative way, and by holding them back from the slightest inaccuracy, to furnish a guaranty for the absolute correctness of all the minutie of the narrative. This perfection of memory and judgment — which, as Dr. Arnold said, would imply the transference of divine attributes to men — has been considered an attribute of the apostolic office. As three out of the five histories in the New Testament were not written by apostles, it has been assumed that the relation of Mark to Peter, and of Luke to Paul, secures an apostolic authority to these non-apostolic Evangelists. That the second and third Gospels, and the Acts, were ever submitted to apostles for their revision and sanction is a proposition which no enlightened scholar would venture to affirm. We find that Luke, in the prologue of the Gospel, does not assume to write, as Councils of the Church have sometimes done, *Sancto Spiritu dictante*; but he invites confidence on the ground of his means of getting knowledge and his diligent investigations. Some of the evangelical historians, Luke certainly, make use of prior documents, written memoranda from other sources. The apostles themselves claimed credence for the story which they told, on the ground that they were telling what they had seen and heard. The number of the Twelve, after the defection of Judas, was filled up by the choice of Matthias, in order that another witness, a companion of Christ, who had heard his teaching and seen his works, might be provided (Acts i. 21, 22). We find that the apostles limit their testimony to the period of their personal acquaintance with Christ; the first thirty years of his life — with the exception of a few incidents relating to his infancy and boyhood which were gathered up from oral sources — being passed over in silence. The laws that determine the credibility of history are respected in the composition of the sacred books. Contemporary evidence is furnished.

The departures from this practice are the exceptions that prove the rule.

The effect of the rigid Harmonistic assumption, when applied in the concrete, is to lead to a mechanical combination of two or more relations, where a sound historical criticism would make a choice among diverse, and commonly unimportant, particulars, or rectify in such points the statement of one Evangelist by the apparently fuller information of another. Thus in the accounts of the denials of Peter, there is not a precise accordance as to localities. With regard to the second denial, Mark says that the same maid (ἡ παιδίσχη) put the question to which he responded; Matthew says, "another maid"; while Luke makes it "another man" (ἕτερος — sc. ἄνθρωπος, ver. 58). This is a trifling divergence. It is a case where a narrator might not wish to be held responsible for a strictly accurate statement. But the older Harmonists, who conceived that the Evangelists must have written with the precision of a notary public, felt it necessary to avoid these variations by assuming that Peter's denials reached the number of nine or ten; although as to the main fact that they were three in number — by which it is meant that there were no more as well as no less than three — the Evangelists are united; and such was unquestionably the real number. Out of a dread to admit the slightest inaccuracies in the Gospels, the Harmonists convert the evangelical history into a grotesque piece of mosaic.

It may serve to illustrate both the mistaken and the true method of historical criticism as applied to the Gospels, if attention is called to a few passages where two or more of the Evangelists are compared with each other. Look, first, at the Sermon on the Mount. We pass by questions as to its chronological place. Luke makes it to have been delivered after Christ descended from the Mount to the plain, with his disciples. On this point a reconciliation, if one seeks it, is not impossible; yet the question arises at once whether Luke does not follow a different tradition from that which is presented in Matthew. Comparatively few scholars question the fact that Matthew connects with the Sermon on the Mount utterances of Christ on other occasions. This we should be led to infer from an inspection of parallel passages which occur in other connections in Luke. The Lord's Prayer is an example.<sup>1</sup>

The difference in the text of the Beatitudes in the two Gospels shows

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 5 *seq.*; Luke xi. 1 *seq.* According to Luke, Jesus was praying in a certain place, and was requested by one of the disciples to teach them how to pray. That in Matthew other discourses are connected with the Sermon on the Mount, Calvin had the acuteness to perceive. He says, "*Sufficere enim piis et modestis lectoribus debet, quod hic ante oculos positam habeant summam doctrinæ Christi collectam ex pluribus et diversis concionibus quarum hæc prima fuit, ubi de beatitudine disseruit apud discipulos.*" — *Opera* (Amst. ed.), vi. 64.

a diversity in the oral or written tradition that was followed. An instance of slight circumstantial variation is in the accounts of a miracle of Jesus at the gate of Jericho.<sup>1</sup> Matthew speaks of two blind men; Mark and Luke of one. It is quite possible that there were two, though the conversation of Jesus may have been with only one of them. But Matthew and Mark say distinctly that it was when Christ was leaving the city, while Luke says that it was when he drew nigh to the city. Afterward he passed through the city. Blind men, and mendicants of all sorts, took their station at the gates of cities. In the tradition which came to Luke, the miracle was placed at the gate by which Jesus entered; in the tradition which appears in the other Evangelists, it was the gate by which he left. The discrepancy shows that there was no collusion between the Evangelical historians. As in other like cases, it confirms, rather than weakens, Christianity evidences.

The discrepancy in the record of the words spoken from heaven at the baptism of Jesus has many parallels in the Gospel histories. A familiar instance is that of the inscription on the cross:—

Matt. xxvii. 37	Mark xv. 26	Luke xxiii. 38	John xix. 19
And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.	And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.	And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.	And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

In the Authorized Version, Luke is made to say that the superscription was “in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew.” These words, which were probably inserted in the text of Luke from John’s Gospel, are left out in the Revised Version. The variations in the form of the inscription are seen at a glance. They point to different sources of information. One harmonistic suggestion is that the inscription was not the same in the three languages. This of course is possible, but not probable.

Another familiar example of discrepancies, trifling in their nature, is in the accounts of the sending out of the Twelve:—

Matt. x. 9, 10	Mark vi. 8	Luke ix. 3
Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; (10) no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food.	And he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; but to go shod with sandals; and, said he, put not on two coats.	And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats.

Mark describes the disciples as going forth with nothing in their hands but a pilgrim’s staff. In Matthew and Luke they are to take not even a staff. The idea in all is that they are to go out unprovided, and to depend wholly on charity.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 29–34; Luke xviii. 35–43, xix. 1; Mark x. 46–52.



## NOTE 21 (p. 203)

THE MIRACLES OF THE GOSPEL IN CONTRAST WITH HEATHEN AND ECCLESIASTICAL MIRACLES<sup>1</sup>

It is frequently alleged that the evidence for pagan and ecclesiastical miracles, which fill so large a space in chronicles of a former day, but which are generally fictitious, is as strong as that for the miracles recorded in the Gospels. What is to be said of the ecclesiastical miracles is, in the main, applicable to miraculous tales found in ancient heathen writers, from Herodotus to Livy, and from Livy to the fall of the ancient Græco-Roman religion. To the stream of Church miracles, then, which flows down from the early centuries, through the middle ages, almost or quite to our own time, we may confine our attention. Is the proof of these alleged miracles equal in force to that of the miracles recorded by the Evangelists? So far from this being the case, there are certain broad marks of distinction by which these last are separated from the general current of miraculous narrative.

1. One direct, although not the exclusive, purpose of the Gospel miracles is to attest the fact of revelation. They are the proper counterpart and proof of revelation. They occur, with few exceptions, only at the marked epochs in the progress of revelation,—the Mosaic era, the reform and advance of the Old Testament religion under the great prophets, and in connection with the ministry of Christ and the founding of the Church. “We know,” it was said, “that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John iii. 2).

On the contrary, ecclesiastical miracles profess to be for a lower, and, in general, for a signally lower end. At the best, they are to aid the preaching of a missionary. The biblical miracles were requisite as a part and proof of revelation. When they have once taken place, testimony adequate is all that can reasonably be demanded as a ground of belief in them. There is no call for a perpetual interruption of the course of nature. Even the Roman Catholic Church holds that the whole deposit of revelation was with Christ and the apostles. The dogmatic decisions of popes and councils are the exposition of that primitive doctrine. Their function is not to originate, but to define, Christian truth.

But, in a vast majority of instances, the ecclesiastical miracles are for some end below that of serving as the credentials of a missionary. At the best, they are to relieve the distress of an individual, without the ulterior and more comprehensive end which attaches to the miracles

<sup>1</sup> Among the valuable discussions of this subject are Douglas's *Criterion*, Newman's *Two Essays* (4th ed., 1875), and Mozley's *Bampton Lectures*.

wrought by Jesus and the apostles. In a multitude of instances they simply minister to an appetite for marvels. Witness the wonders that crowd the pages of the apocryphal Gospels. Many are for objects extremely trivial. Fantastic wonders are ascribed to Jesus as having been wrought in his childhood. Tertullian gives an account of a vision in which an angel prescribed to a female the size and length of her veil. Some, like the Jansenist miracles at the tomb of Abbé Paris, which Hume cites as modern examples of miracles supported by testimony, are in the cause of a political or religious party, and against an antagonistic faction. Very frequently miracles are valued, and said to be wrought, merely as verifications of the sanctity of a person of high repute for piety.

The distinction which we are here considering is important. No doubt there is an antecedent presumption against the occurrence of miracles, which arises from our belief in the uniformity of nature and the conviction we have that an established order is beneficent. This presumption Christians believe to be neutralized by the need of revelation, and by the peculiar characteristics of the Christian system and of its author. But in proportion as the end assigned to miracles is lower, that adverse presumption retains force.

2. The Gospel miracles were not wrought in coincidence with a prevailing system, and for the furtherance of it, but in connection with teaching hostile to prevalent beliefs.

This is another striking difference. Jesus won all of his disciples to faith in him. They did not inherit this faith: they did not grow up in it. He and they alike had to confront opposition at every step. "The world," he said, "hateth me." His doctrines and his idea of the kingdom of God clashed with Judaic opinion and rooted prejudice. Christianity had to push forward in the face of the enmity of all the existing forms of religion. But how is it with the ecclesiastical miracles of later ages? Generally speaking, they occurred, if wrought at all, in the midst of communities and smaller circles of devotees which were already in fervent sympathy with the cause and the creed in behalf of which they were supposed to be performed. The narrations of them sprang up among those who were, beforehand, full of confidence in the Church as the possessor of miraculous power, and in the close relation to God of the individuals to whom such miracles were ascribed. Not as in the days of Jesus and the apostles were these denounced and proscribed by the ecclesiastical rulers and leaders. Recollecting what occurred at the origin of the Church, full of faith in the supernatural powers which were thought still to reside in it, men were on the lookout for startling manifestations of them. There was a previous habit of credulity in this particular direction. The same scepticism which is deemed reasonable in respect to stories of miracles performed by Dominicans or Franciscans, where the rival interests

of the two orders are involved, is natural in regard to wonders said to have been wrought in behalf of a creed enthusiastically cherished. In Galilee, Judea, and the various provinces of the Roman Empire, Christianity was a new religion. It was at the start an unpopular religion, in a struggle against widespread, bitter prejudice. The whole atmosphere was thus totally different from that which prevailed in the middle ages, or even in the Roman Empire, after the Gospel had succeeded in gaining hundreds of thousands of converts.

3. Motives to fraud, which justly excite suspicion in the case of many of the ecclesiastical miracles, did not exist in the case of the miracles of the Gospel.

It cannot be denied that pious fraud played a prominent part in producing the tales of the supernatural which are interspersed in the biographies of the saints. Ecclesiastical superiors have often given a free rein to popular credulity, on the maxim that the end sanctifies the means. Where positive trickery has not been practised, circumstances have been concealed, which, if known, would have stripped many a transaction of the miraculous aspect which it wore in the eyes of the ignorant. The same spirit that gave rise to the medieval forgeries, of which the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals are a conspicuous example, was capable of conniving at numberless deceits which served to bolster up sacerdotal pretensions. In order that an individual may be enrolled as a saint, and invoked in this character, it has been held to be indispensable that he should have wrought miracles. Miracles are held to be a badge of sainthood. It is easy to conceive, not only what a stimulus this theory must have afforded to the devout imagination, but also what conscious exaggeration and wilful invention must have sprung out of such a tenet.

When we enter the company of Christ and the apostles, we find that this incentive to the invention of miracles is utterly absent. We find, rather, the deepest antipathy to every species of deceit and fraud.

4. A great number of the Roman Catholic miracles can be explained by natural causes, without any impeachment of the honesty of the narrators. Frequently, natural events of no uncommon occurrence are viewed as supernatural. The physical effect of vigils, and fastings, and pilgrimages, on the maladies of those who resorted to these practices, was, no doubt, in many cases salutary. As the body acts on the mind, so the mind powerfully affects the body. Heated imagination, ardent faith, the confident hope of relief, may produce physical effects of an extraordinary character. There is a variety of nervous disorders which are cured by a sudden shock which turns feeling into a new channel. Mohammed was a victim of hysteria attended by catalepsy. Especially when medical knowledge was scanty, exceptional conditions of mind and body were easily mistaken for supernatural phenomena.

If the miracles of the Gospels consisted only of visions, or of the

cure of less aggravated cases of demoniacal possession, or of the healing of a limited class of diseases which spring mainly from nervous derangement, there might be no occasion for referring them to supernatural agency. But such miracles as healing, by a touch, of one born blind, the cure of the lunatic at Gadara, the multiplication of the loaves, the conversion of water into wine, the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, and of Lazarus, the resurrection of Jesus himself, baffle attempts at naturalistic solution. If miracles such as these are admitted on the ground of the testimony to them, in connection with the exalted character of Christ and with the doctrine of Christianity, it is alike unreasonable and profitless to resort to any naturalistic explanation of visions and cures, some of which, considered by themselves, might perhaps be accounted for by that method. A line of demarcation between two sets of Gospel miracles is drawn without any historical warrant. If certain of them do not of necessity carry us beyond the limit of known physiological and psychological causes, and if this boundary is not strictly definable, others there are, equally well attested, which do undeniably lie beyond this limit, and, if the phenomena are admitted, must be referred to the interposition of God.

5. The incompetence of the witnesses to ecclesiastical miracles, as a rule, is a decisive reason for discrediting their accounts. We do not include under this head an intention to deceive. Reports of pagan and ecclesiastical miracles frequently rest on no contemporary evidence. It was more than a century after the death of Apollonius of Tyana when Philostratus wrote his life. Sixteen years after the death of Ignatius Loyola, Ribadeneira wrote his biography. At that time he knew of no miracles performed by his hero. St. Francis Xavier himself makes but one or two references to wonders wrought by him: and these occurrences do not necessarily imply anything miraculous. In the case of an ancient saint, Gregory Thaumaturgus, the life that we possess was written long after his time by Gregory Nyssa. Boniface, the apostle to the Germans, and Ansgar, the apostle to the Scandinavians, do not themselves claim to be miracle-workers. It is others who make the claim for them. Of the string of miracles which Bede furnishes, there are few, if any, which he affirms to have occurred within his personal knowledge.

Where there are contemporary narratives, it is evident, generally, that the chroniclers are too deficient in the habit of accurate observation to be trusted. This want of carefulness is manifest in what they have to say of ordinary matters. Dr. Arnold gives an example of the inaccuracy of Bede.<sup>1</sup> The Saxon chronicler describes a striking phenomenon on the southern coast of England in such a way that one who is familiar with it would be quite unable to recognize it from this author's

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on Modern History* (Am. ed.), p. 128.

description. Where the observation of natural objects is so careless, how can we expect a correct account of phenomena which are taken for miraculous? Excited feeling, on the watch for marvels, in minds not in the least trained to strict observation, renders testimony to a great extent worthless.

Now, who were the original witnesses of the miracles of Jesus? As Cardinal Newman has said, "They were very far from a dull or ignorant race. The inhabitants of a maritime and border country (as Galilee was); engaged, moreover, in commerce; composed of natives of various countries, and therefore, from the nature of the case, acquainted with more than one language—have necessarily their intellects sharpened, and their minds considerably enlarged, and are of all men least disposed to acquiesce in marvellous tales. Such a people must have examined before they suffered themselves to be excited in the degree which the Evangelists describe." Their conviction, be it observed, was no "bare and indolent assent to facts which they might have thought antecedently probable, or not improbable," but a great change in principle and mode of life, and such a change as involved the sacrifice of every earthly good. There is a vast difference between the dull assent of superstitious minds, the impressions of unreflecting devotees, and that positive faith which transformed the character of the first disciples, and moved them to forsake their kindred, and to lay down their lives, in attestation of the truth of their testimony. A conviction on the part of such persons, and attended by consequences like these, must have had its origin in an observation of facts about which there could be no mistake.

6. The Gospel miracles, unlike the ecclesiastical, were none of them merely tentative, unsuccessful, or of doubtful reality.

In ancient times the temple of Æsculapius was thronged by persons in quest of healing at the hands of the God. No one could pretend that more than a fraction of these votaries were actually healed. Of the multitude who failed of the benefit there was no mention or memory.

To come down to a later day, many thousands were annually touched for the scrofula by the English kings. Some recovered; and their recovery, no doubt, was blazoned abroad. But, of the generality of those who thus received the royal touch, there is not the slightest proof that it was followed by a recovery. So, elsewhere, among those to whom miraculous power has been attributed, the instances of apparent success were connected with uncounted failures of which no record is preserved. Even in the cases where it is loudly claimed that there was every appearance of miracles, as in certain of the wonders at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, it is found that some have been only partially relieved of their maladies, or have experienced soon a recurrence of them.

Mark the contrast presented by the miracles of the Gospel. They were performed by a definite class of persons. They were "the signs



of an apostle." The main point, however, is that there were no exceptions, none on whom the wonder-working power failed of its effect. There were no abortive experiments. *All* whom Jesus attempted to heal were healed. *None* went away as they came. None went away with painful symptoms alleviated, while the disorders were not removed. Had such instances of failure occurred, they would not have escaped the attention of the apostles and of their enemies. Confidence in Christ would have been weakened, if not subverted. In accounting for the Gospel miracles, the supposition of accident is thus precluded. We do not reason from occasional coincidences.

7. The grotesque character of so large a number of the ecclesiastical miracles awakens a just presumption against them as a class.

A miracle emanates from the power of God. But it will not be, for that reason, at variance with his other attributes. As far as an alleged miracle appears to be unworthy of God in any particular, its title to be credited is weakened.

The miracles in the apocryphal Gospels (such as that of the throne of Herod, drawn out to its right length by the child Jesus, to remedy a blunder of Joseph in making it) give no unfair idea of the style of many narratives in the legends of the Church. Among the miracles attributed to Thomas à Becket is the story that the eyes of a priest of Nantes, who doubted them, fell from their sockets. "In remembrance," says Froude, "of his old sporting days, the archbishop would mend the broken wings and legs of hawks which had suffered from herons." "Dead lambs, pigs, and geese were restored to life, to silence Sadducees who doubted the resurrection."<sup>1</sup> The biographers of Xavier relate that, having washed the sores of a poor invalid, *he drank the water*, and the sores were forthwith healed. Even St. Bernard, preaching on a summer day in a church where the people were annoyed by flies, excommunicates these winged insects; and in the morning they are found to be all dead, and are swept out in heaps. It would be unjust to say that trivial, ludicrous, or disgusting circumstances belong to all ecclesiastical miracles. But such features are so common that they tend to affix a corresponding character to the set of wonders, taken as a whole, to which they pertain.

That the miracles of the Bible have a dignity and beauty peculiar to themselves is acknowledged by disbelievers; for instance, by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. If any of them are thought to wear a different look, they are exceptions. "Hence," observes Cardinal Newman, "the Scripture accounts of Eve's temptation by the serpent, of the speaking of Balaam's ass, of Jonah and the whale, and of the devils sent into the herd of swine are by themselves more or less improbable,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. A. Abbott's work on Becket furnishes a variety of examples equally grotesque and in themselves unworthy of credit. See, e.g., *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I, 265 seq. See also Morris's *Life of Becket*, c. xxxiv.

being unequal in dignity to the rest." "They are then supported," the same author holds, "by the system in which they are found, as being a few out of a multitude, and therefore but exceptions (and, as we suppose, but apparent exceptions) to the general rule." Whether this be so or not, the remark implies that their exceptional character makes it necessary that they should have an extraordinary support if they are to be credited. The generality of the miracles of Scripture are of an elevated character. They are at a wide remove in this respect from the common run of pagan and ecclesiastical miracles. The contrast is like that of a genuine coin with a clumsy counterfeit.

8. The evidential value of the miracles of the Gospel is not weakened, even if it be admitted that miraculous events may have occasionally occurred in later ages.

The restoration of the sick in response to prayer is commonly through no visible or demonstrable exception to the unaided operation of natural law. Yet no one deserves contempt for holding that, in certain exceptional instances, the supernatural agency discovers itself by evidence palpable to the senses. So discreet an historical critic as Neander will not deny that St. Bernard may have been the instrument of effecting cures properly miraculous. It is true, as was suggested above, that missionary work is something to which human powers are adequate, and which requires no other aid from above than the silent, invisible operation of the Spirit of God. Yet Edmund Burke, speaking of the introduction of Christianity into Britain by Augustine and his associates, remarks, "It is by no means impossible that, for an end so worthy, Providence on some occasions might directly have interfered." "I should think it very presumptuous to say," writes F. D. Maurice, "that it has never been needful, in the modern history of the world, to break the idols of sense and experience by the same method which was sanctioned in the days of old." Those who, like the writers just quoted, hold that miraculous events have not been wholly wanting in later ages, cannot maintain that they have occurred under such conditions of uniformity and the like, as distinguish the miracles of Christ and the apostles. The most that can be claimed is that *sometimes* they have occurred in answer to prayer, — a form of answer on which the petitioner has never been able to count. The judicious student who surveys the entire history of miraculous pretension will be slow to admit the miraculous in particular instances of the kind described, without the application of strict tests of evidence. He will bear in mind that the great, the principal design of the miracle is to serve as at once a constituent and proof of revelation.

A particular examination of the alleged miracles of the early age of the Church is precluded by the limits of the present Note. The following points are specially worthy of attention : —

1. The miracles said to have been performed in the second and third centuries are far less marked and less numerous than those referred to in the two centuries that followed, — a fact the reverse of what we should expect if these narrations were founded in truth.

2. The same writers — as Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, Augustine — who record contemporary miracles, imply in other passages that the age of miracles had gone by, and that their own times were in marked contrast, in this respect, with the era of the apostles.

3. The miracles related by the Fathers are mostly exorcisms, the healing of the sick, and visions; that is, occurrences where natural agencies are most easily mistaken for supernatural. Miracles in which this error is impossible lack sufficient attestation.<sup>1</sup>

The true view on this subject appears to be that miraculous manifestations in the Church ceased gradually. No sharp line of demarcation can be drawn, marking off the age of miracles from the subsequent period, when the operation of the Divine Providence and Spirit was no longer palpably distinguished from the movements of natural law.

As we advance into the fourth century, called the Nicene age, we meet with a notable increase in the number of alleged miracles. Yet Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, speak of the apostolic age, as distinguished from their own, as having been a period marked by miracles. Notwithstanding the high merits of the authors of the Nicene era, they discover, more and more, the artificial, rhetorical tone which had now come to infect literature. There was a habit of thought and style which tends to breed exaggeration. It was a period of decadence. Retic-worship, the invocation of martyrs and saints, and like superstitions established themselves in the Church, and the alleged miracles were frequently associated with these customs. A spirit of credulity gained ground. The evidence for most of the post-apostolic miracles which the Fathers advert to melts away on examination. In cases where there is no ground for distrusting the sincerity of the narrator, we are bound to consider whether the phenomena which one of the Fathers reports were known to him directly; and, if they were, whether they necessarily involve anything miraculous, — whether they may not reasonably be referred to hallucination, or to some other source of unconscious illusion.

As an example, we may take the reports of miracles which Augustine has collected in his treatise on the City of God.<sup>2</sup> He starts with a reference to the objection that miracles are no longer wrought. "It might be replied," he says, "that they are no longer necessary, as they were at first." This answer is in keeping with other statements made by him, which imply that no such miracles were wrought in his time as

<sup>1</sup> For the Patristic passages on these three points, see Mozley's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 195 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xxii.

were done by Christ and the apostles. But in this place he affirms that miracles are wrought, though more privately, and that they are less widely reported. Many of those to which he refers are alleged to have been performed in connection with the relics of the proto-martyr Stephen, which, as was claimed, were discovered in A.D. 415, at a place called Carphagamala, in Palestine, through information given by Gamaliel, the Jewish rabbi, in visions to Lucian, a priest of the Church there. A portion of these relics found their way to Africa, and became the centre of miraculous phenomena, the details of which are given by Augustine. The circumstances of the finding of the relics are so improbable as to suggest beforehand a legitimate doubt as to miraculous interpositions in connection with them. But Augustine also relates other miracles as having occurred in Africa. The first is described at length: it is the disappearance of a fistula from the body of a man at Carthage, who had not long before undergone a surgical operation for the same trouble. This event, which fills Augustine with devout amazement, is easily accounted for by physicians at present, without any recourse to the supernatural. It was simply ignorance of physiology that led to the inference that it was a miracle. The next case is that of Innocentia, a Christian woman in the same city, who had a cancer on one of her breasts, and was cured by the sign of the cross made upon it by the first woman whom she saw coming out of the baptistery, of whom she had been directed in a dream to ask this favor. Here, in the absence of a more particular statement of the circumstances, it would be rash to suppose a miracle. But the attestation is in this case singularly deficient. The supposed miracle had been kept secret, much to Augustine's indignation, who was somehow informed of the event, and reprimanded the woman for not making it public. She replied that she had not kept silence on the subject. But Augustine found, on inquiry, that the women who were best acquainted with her "knew nothing of it," and "listened in great astonishment," when, at his instigation, she told her story. How remarkable that the sudden deliverance from a disorder which the physicians had pronounced incurable should not have been known to her most intimate female acquaintance! Why did she tell Augustine that she had not kept it to herself? How did he himself find it out? The next miracle is that of "black, woolly-haired boys," who appeared to a gouty doctor and warned him not to be baptized that year. They trod on his feet, and caused him the acutest pain. He knew them to be devils, and disobeyed them. He was relieved in the very act of baptism, and did not suffer from gout afterward. If we suppose that the fact was well attested, who would be bold enough to ascribe it to a miracle? How easy, in a multitude of cures of this sort, to confound the antecedent with the cause, the *post hoc* with the *propter hoc*! Several of the miracles which Augustine had gathered into his net are of a grotesque character, as



that which provided Florentius, a poor tailor of Hippo, with a new coat, after a prayer to the twenty martyrs, whose shrine was near at hand. Who was the cook that found the gold ring in the fish's belly? and who was it that interrogated her on the subject? There are three or four instances of the raising of the dead which are found in Augustine's list. But of neither of these does he pretend to have been an eye-witness; nor, if the circumstances are credited in the form in which they are given, is there anything to prove that death had actually taken place. A swoon, or the temporary suspension of the powers of life, may have been in each instance all that really occurred.

Another miracle in Augustine's catalogue is that of the martyrs of Milan, which occurred while he was in that city, and which is also described circumstantially by Ambrose, the celebrated bishop. A violent conflict was raging between Ambrose and the mass of the populace, on the one side, and the Arian Empress Justina, the widow of Valentinian I., with her following, on the other. Ambrose had refused her demand that one church edifice should be set apart for Arian worship. The populace, who were in full sympathy with their bishop, were in a high state of excitement. A new church was to be dedicated, and they were eager for relics with which to enrich it. Then follows the unexpected discovery of the remains of two utterly forgotten martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius, with fresh blood upon them, and able to shake the earth in the neighborhood where they lay. As they are transported through the city, a blind butcher touches the fringe of the pall that covers them, and at once receives his sight. We are not willing to join with Isaac Taylor in imputing to Ambrose himself complicity in a fraud. Yet the circumstances connected with the discovery of the bodies indicate that fraud and superstitious imagination were combined in those who were most active in the matter. The blindness of the butcher was not congenital. It was a disorder which had obliged him to retire from his business. But oculists know well that cases of total or partial blindness are sometimes instantly relieved. What was the special cause of the disorder in this instance? Had there been symptoms of amendment before? Was the cure complete at the moment? As long as we are unable to answer these and like questions, it is unwise to assume that there was a miracle. We miss in the accounts, be it observed, the sobriety of the Gospel narratives. They are surcharged with the florid rhetoric to which we have adverted.

The evidence for most of those post-apostolic miracles which are more commonly referred to melts away on examination. The miracle of "the thundering legion," whose prayers are said to have saved the army of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 174), and to have thus turned him from his hostility to Christianity, is one of these. But no such effect was produced on the emperor's mind, since he persecuted the Christians afterwards (A.D. 178). The tempest of rain which brought relief to the



army, the heathen asserted to be the consequence of their own prayers to Jupiter. If it was true that a sudden shower of the kind described in the story followed upon the supplications of the Christian soldiers, we should hardly be justified in pronouncing it a miracle in the proper sense of the term. The story of the cross with an inscription upon it, seen by Constantine in the sky, Eusebius heard from the emperor not until twenty-six years after the event, and was not acquainted with it when, with the best opportunities for informing himself, he wrote his *Church History* (about A.D. 325). That Constantine had a dream in the night such as Lactantius describes, is not improbable. It is possible that on the day previous, a parhelion, or some similar phenomenon, may have seemed to his excited and superstitious feeling a cross of light. Under the circumstances, and considering the defects in the testimony, this natural explanation is far the most probable. None of the post-apostolic miracles appears to have a stronger attestation than that of the breaking-out of fire from the foundations of the temple at Jerusalem, when the workmen, by the order of the Emperor Julian, set about the task of rebuilding that edifice. The fact is stated by a contemporary heathen writer of good repute, Ammianus Marcellinus. Notwithstanding the grave historical difficulties which have been suggested by Lardner and others, it seems most reasonable to conclude that some startling phenomenon of the kind actually occurred. Neander says, "A sign coming from God is here certainly not to be mistaken, although natural causes also coöperate."<sup>1</sup> Guizot, in his notes on Gibbon, explains the occurrence by referring it to the explosion of the subterranean gases suddenly liberated by the workmen. Although the admission of a miracle in such a case detracts nothing from the peculiar function and evidential force of the miracles of Scripture, we cannot feel obliged to call in here supernatural agency. Natural causes of a physical nature, together with the fears and fancies of the laborers, and the exaggerating imagination of reporters, suffice to explain the alarm that was created, and the cessation of the work.

The standing argument at the present day against the credibility of the Evangelists is the precedent afforded by the biographers of "the saints," and of the incredible marvels which they mingle with authentic history. To some it is no matter of surprise that the apostles should be utterly deceived in this branch of their testimony. Thus Matthew Arnold boldly admits, that, if we had the original reports of eyewitnesses, we should not have a miracle less than we have now.<sup>2</sup> Very different is the judgment of a great historical scholar, Niebuhr. He refers to the critical spirit in which he had come to the study of the

<sup>1</sup> *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Review*, vol. xxvi. p. 697.

New Testament histories and to the imperfections which he believed himself to find in them. He adds: "Here, as in every historical subject, when I contemplated the immeasurable gulf between the narrative and the facts narrated, this disturbed me no further. He whose earthly life and sorrows were depicted had for me a perfectly real existence, and his whole history had the same reality, even if it were not related with literal exactness in any single point. Hence, also, the fundamental fact of miracles, which, according to my conviction, must be conceded, unless we adopt the not merely incomprehensible but absurd hypothesis that the Holiest was a deceiver, and his disciples either dupes or liars; and that deceivers had preached a holy religion, in which self-renunciation is everything, and in which there is nothing tending toward the erection of a priestly rule, — nothing that can be acceptable to vicious inclinations. As regards a miracle in the strictest sense, it really only requires an unprejudiced and penetrating study of nature to see that those related are as far as possible from absurdity, and a comparison with legends, or the pretended miracles of other religions, to perceive by what a different spirit they are animated."<sup>1</sup>

"*To perceive by what a different spirit they are animated*" — it is just this which Renan fails to see in the legends of the saints. It is found impossible to dispute the fact that testimony substantially equivalent to the contents of the Gospels was given by the apostles. The grand hypothesis of a post-apostolic mythology, set up by Strauss, is given up. That the apostles were wilful deceivers, if it be sometimes insinuated, is felt to be a weak position. This old fortification of unbelief is abandoned. What, then, shall be said? Why, answers Renan, they were, like the followers of St. Francis of Assisi, credulous, romantic enthusiasts. The frequency with which he reverts to the lives of St. Francis indicates what is the real source and prop of his theory in his own mind. It is well to look at this pretended parallel more narrowly.

We have two lives of St. Francis by personal followers, — one, by Thomas de Celano; and another, by the "three companions." Another life is from the pen of Bonaventura, who was five years old when the saint died.<sup>2</sup> The moment one takes up these biographies, he finds himself in an atmosphere different from that of nature and real life. He is transported into dream-land. Feeling drowns perception. Everything is suffused with emotion. We are in an atmosphere where neither discriminating judgment nor cool observation is to be looked for. Here is an example of the strain of eulogy in which these disciples of St. Francis, intoxicated with admiration, indulge: "Oh, how beautiful, how splendid, how glorious, he appeared, in innocence

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of Niebuhr* (Am. ed.), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> These lives are in the *Acta Sanctorum* (ed. nov.), vol. 90, pp. 683, 798.

of life and in simplicity of language, in purity of heart, in delight in God, in fraternal love, in odorous obedience, in complaisant devotedness, in angelic aspect! Sweet in manners, placid in nature, affable in speech, most apt in exhortation, most faithful in trusts, prudent in counsel, efficient in action, gracious in all things, serene in mind, sweet in spirit, sober in temper, steadfast in contemplation, persevering in esteem, and in all things the same, swift to show favor, slow to anger," etc.<sup>1</sup> This is only one of the outbursts of ecstatic admiration for "the morning star," the luminary "more radiant than the sun," in which these chroniclers break out. When we turn to the saint who is the object of all this fervor, we find in his character, to be sure, much to respect. There is "sweetness and light"; but the light is by far the minor factor. The practice of asceticism rendered his bodily state at all times abnormal and unhealthy. To lie on the ground, with a log for a pillow; to deny himself the refreshment of sleep when it was most needed; to choose, on principle, the coarsest food, and to insist on its being cooked, if cooked at all, in a way that made it as unpalatable and indigestible as possible; to weep every day so copiously that his eyesight was nearly destroyed, and then, as always when he was ill, to take remedies with great reluctance, if he took them at all — these customs were not favorable to sanity of mental action any more than to soundness of body. They coexisted with attractive virtues; they sprang from pure motives; but they were none the less excesses of superstition. Persuaded on one occasion, when he was enfeebled by illness, to eat of a fowl, he demonstrated his penitence by causing himself to be led, with a rope round his neck, like a criminal, through the streets of Assisi, by one of his followers, who shouted all the time, "Behold the glutton!"

The sort of miracles ascribed to St. Francis, and the measure of credence which the stories of them deserve, may be understood from what is said of his miraculous dealing with the lower animals. On a journey, leaving his companions in the road, he stepped aside into the midst of a concourse of doves, crows, and other birds. They were not frightened at his approach. Whereupon he delivered to them a sermon, in which he addressed them as "my brother-birds," and gave them wholesome counsel — supposing them able to comprehend it — respecting their duties to God. But we are assured that they did comprehend it, and signified their approbation by stretching their necks, opening their mouths, and flapping their wings. Having received from the saint the benediction, and permission to go, this winged congregation flew away. This is only one in a catalogue of wonders of the same kind. Fishes, as well as birds, listened to preaching, and waited for the discourse to conclude. We can readily believe Celano, when he says that St. Francis was a man of "the utmost fervor," and had a feeling of "piety and

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Sanctorum*, ut supra, p. 716.

gentleness towards irrational creatures." He was probably one of those who have a remarkable power of dispelling the fear, and winning the confidence, of animals. Incidents where this natural power was exercised were magnified, by the fancy of devotees, into the tales, a sample of which has been given. A like discount from other miraculous narratives resting on the same testimony would reduce the events which they relate to the dimensions of natural, though it may be remarkable, occurrences. It is needless to recount these alleged miracles. One or two will suffice. Travelling together, St. Francis and his followers see in the road a purse, apparently stuffed with coins. There was a temptation to pick it up. The rule of poverty was in imminent peril. The saint warns his curious disciple that the devil is in the purse. Finally, the disciple, after prayer, is permitted to touch it, when out leaps a serpent, and instantly — *mirabile dictu!* — serpent and purse vanish. When the saint came to die, one of his followers beheld his soul, as it parted from the body, in appearance like an immense luminous star, shedding its radiance over many waters, borne upon a white cloud, and ascending straight to heaven.

The great miracle in connection with St. Francis is that of the "stigmata," or the marks of the wounds of Christ, which the Saviour was thought in a vision to have imprinted upon his body. From the hour when a vision of the crucified Christ was vouchsafed him, as he thought, while he was in prayer before his image, "his heart," say the "*tres socii*," was wounded and melted at the recollection of the Lord's passion; so that he carried while he lived the wounds — *stigmata* — of the Lord Jesus in his heart. He sought in all ways to be literally conformed to the Lord as a sufferer. For example, remembering that the Virgin had no place where her son could lay his head, he would take his food from the table where he was dining, carry it out, and eat it on the ground. It was his constant effort to bring upon himself the identical experiences of pain and sorrow which befell Christ. Especially did he concentrate his thoughts in intense and long-continued meditation on the crucifixion. There is a considerable number of other instances of *stigmata* found upon the body, besides that of St. Francis. The scientific solution, which has high authority in its favor, is that the phenomenon in question is the result of the mental state acting by a physiological law upon the body. It is considered to be one effect of the mysterious interaction of mind and body, the products of which, when body and mind are in a morbid condition, are exceptionally remarkable.

Before leaving our subject, let the reader reflect on that one trait of the apostles by which they are distinguished from other witnesses to alleged miracles. It is their *truthfulness*. Men may be devout; they may be capable of exalted emotions; they may undertake works of self-sacrifice, and be revered for their saintly tempers; and yet they may lack this one sterling quality on which the worth of testimony



depends. This defect may not be conscious. It may result from a passive, uninquiring temper. It may grow out of a habit of seeing things in a hazy atmosphere of feeling, in which all things are refracted from the right line. But the apostles, unlike many devotees of even Christian ages, were *truthful*. Without this habit of seeing and relating things as they actually occurred, their writings would never have exerted that pure influence which has flowed from them. Because they uttered "words of truth and soberness," they make those who thoroughly sympathize with the spirit of their writings value truth above all things.

And there is one proof of the truth of the apostles' testimony which can be appreciated by the unlearned. The character of Jesus as he is depicted in the Gospels is too unique to be the result of invention. It is the image of a perfection too transcendent to be devised by the wit of man. Yet it is perfectly self-consistent, and obviously real in all its traits. In him the natural and the supernatural, divine authority and human feeling, the power which gives life to the dead and the sympathy which expresses itself in tears, blend in complete accord. This portrait of Christ in the Gospels is evidently drawn from the life. It demonstrates the truth of the Gospel history.

#### NOTE 22 (p. 343)

It is not uncommon at present to hear it asserted or insinuated that religion, and the Christian religion in particular, has been an obstacle in the way of the progress of natural science, including, under this designation, the various departments of research which concern themselves with the material world. Sometimes Christianity is spoken of as an enemy still formidable. The questions which the naturalist has striven to settle by observation and reasoning, he has been told are already determined, once for all, by the infallible authority of the Bible.

The general allegation is not without plausibility. It is not a pure fabrication. There are facts on which it is founded, whatever mistake and whatever exaggeration are carried into the interpretation of them. That in the name of religion, in past times, nearer and more remote, the legitimate pursuits, researches, arguments, and hypotheses of physical inquirers have been frowned upon, denounced, and proscribed is undeniable. In antiquity, prior to Christ, science was not without its persecuted votaries. Anaxagoras was arraigned before an Athenian court for holding impious physical doctrine, such as the opinion that the sun is an incandescent stone, larger than the Peloponnesus; and he owed his deliverance to the friendship and the eloquence of Pericles. Passing down into Christian times, it is a familiar fact that, in the middle ages, the students who early interested themselves in chemical experiments — whether in the hope of transmuting the baser metals into gold, or for some better reason — were suspected of having entered into a league with the devil, and of



accomplishing their experiments with the aid of this dark confederate. Even Albert the Great, the teacher of Aquinas, did not wholly escape this dangerous suspicion. At a later day Roger Bacon had more to endure on the ground of analogous imputations. Turning to still later times, we are at once reminded of the ecclesiastical antagonism to astronomy, and of the memorable case of Galileo. The publication of the documents connected with this case has put it into the power of every candid person, who will give the requisite attention to them, to get at an exact knowledge of the facts; and it has put it out of the power of theological partisans to conceal or distort the truth. It is true that much is still said of the Florentine astronomer's imprudence in the advocacy of his doctrines, and of his temerity in venturing to discuss the biblical relations of his discoveries, instead of leaving the interpretation of texts to the authorized mouthpieces of the Church. But nothing that he did affords any valid excuse, or hardly even a faint palliation, for the enormous wrong of the organized, unrelenting endeavor to suppress the publication of important scientific truth, and for the more terrible sin of driving an old man to perjure himself by abjuring beliefs which his tempters and persecutors well knew that in his heart he really held.

Nothing so disgraceful as the condemnation of old Galileo, and his abjuration compelled under menace of the torture, can be laid to the charge of Protestants, as regards the treatment accorded to the devotees of natural science. But Protestantism has to acknowledge that the same sort of mistake has been made, with circumstances less tragic and signal, by professed advocates of a larger liberty of thought. From the first rise of geology, down to a recent day, the students of this branch of science have had to fight their way against an opposition conducted in the name of religion and of the Bible. They were charged with a presumptuous attempt to contravene the plain teaching of revelation. Cowper, in satirizing the dreams and delusions which get hold of the minds of men, does not omit to castigate those who

“Drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn  
That He who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.”

There is no doubt that the amiable poet intends to pour scorn upon the theory that the globe is more than about six thousand years old,—a theory then novel, but now universally accepted. The geologists were flying in the face of Moses: they were audaciously setting up their pretended record, dug out of the earth, against the Creator's own testimony, given in writing. What could indicate more palpably the arrogance of reason? How many pulpits thundered forth their denunciation

of the impious fiction of the geologists! The most recent instance of mistaken religious zeal in a blaze against the naturalists is furnished by the advent of Darwinism. The recollection is still fresh of the anathemas which the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* provoked.

The causes of the attitude of intolerance which has frequently been taken by religious men toward new opinions in natural science are multiple. There is, first, the customary impatience of new truth, or of new doctrine which stands in opposition to cherished ideas, — ideas that have long had a quiet lodgement in the mind. This species of conservatism is far from being peculiar to theologians or to the religious class: it belongs to other classes of human beings as well, and is manifested equally in connection with other beliefs. The path which scientific discoverers have to tread, apart from the religious and ecclesiastical jealousies which they are liable to awaken, is not apt to be a smooth one. Every important revolution in scientific opinion has succeeded, not without a conflict with the adherents of the traditional view, — an internecine war among the cultivators of science themselves.

Then, secondly, religious faith, as it exists in almost every mind, is habitually associated with beliefs erroneously supposed to be implicated in it. Religious beliefs, in the average mind, are so interwoven with one another, as the mere effect of association, where there may be no necessary bond of union, that where one of them is assailed, the whole are thought to be in danger. Time was, when a belief in witchcraft was held by many to be an *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*. Even John Wesley expresses this opinion, or something equivalent. It was a belief that had existed so long, it had been adopted and practised on by so many of the good and bad, it was judged to be so recognized in the Scriptures, it entered so intimately into the accepted mode of conceiving of supernatural agents, that the loss of it out of the faith of a Christian was felt to be like a displacement of a stone from the arch: it would lead to the downfall of the whole structure. The old Greeks held that the stars were severally the abode of deific beings: they were animated and moved by intelligences. Plato and Aristotle were not delivered from this way of thinking. When a man like Anaxagoras said that the sun was a stone, the entire theological edifice was felt to be menaced with overthrow. Men did not at once discern that atheism did not follow. The disposition "to multiply essentials" good Richard Baxter considered the bane of the Church, the prolific source of intolerance and division. The tendency to identify accident with substance, the failure to discern the core of a truth from its integuments, is at the root of much of the rash and unreasoning and vehement resistance that has been offered in past times to the advances of natural science.

After these preliminary remarks on the causes of complaint which students of nature have had in times distant and recent, we proceed to

affirm that the general allegation against religion and Christianity, of having proved a hindrance to the advancement of scientific knowledge, is without a just foundation. In the patristic age, in the history of ancient Christianity, writers can find little that can help them to bolster up their fictitious charge. To understand the middle ages, one must take into view the domination of Aristotle, which, partly for good and partly for evil, established itself in the thirteenth century in the educated class. At first Aristotle was resisted, especially when the Arabic Pantheism linked itself to his teaching; but finally he came to be considered as a chosen man who had exhausted the possibilities of natural reason. Considering what the character of civilization was in that era, the influence of the Stagirite was natural, and not without a great intellectual benefit. With the Reformation, his sceptre was broken. The way was opened by this emancipation for the progress of physical and natural science. The epochs in this great emancipation are marked by the advent of the voyagers Columbus and Da Gama, by the discoveries of Copernicus and Vesalius, by the revolution effected by Newton, by the extension of astronomical science through the elder Herschel, and by the final triumph of the method of experimental and inductive research which owed much to the influence of Bacon, but the glory of which must be shared by a multitude of explorers. To figure this progress of culture, through Aristotle's reign and since his downfall, as a "conflict with religion," is a proceeding as shallow as it is calumnious.<sup>1</sup>

The indebtedness of science to the Arabs is often overstated. Nestorians were the tutors and guides of the Arabs. Alfarabi and Avicenna were pupils of Syrian and Christian physicians. In the ninth century, Hassein Ibn Ishak was at the head of a school of interpreters at Bagdad, by whom the Arabs were furnished with the treatises of the Stagirite and of his ancient commentators.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, the additions which the Arabs made to the stock of learning were comparatively small. We say "comparatively." In comparison with what they learned from the Greeks, their contributions were small; but, especially in comparison with the scientific achievements of Christian students of later days, the discoveries of the Mohammedans were insignificant. Whewell, in his *History of the Inductive Sciences*, has brought out very distinctly the fact that it was not until scientific discovery and experiment were taken up under Christian auspices and by Christian explorers, that the astonishing advances were made which give character to modern science. In astronomy, the favorite study of the Arabs, and one in which they really did much, what is all their original teaching when set by the side of the work done by Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and Newton?

<sup>1</sup> Zöckler's work, *Gesch. d. Beziehungen d. Theol. u. Naturwissenschaft* (1877), contains interesting matter on the points here considered.

<sup>2</sup> See Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philosophy*, i. pp. 410 seq.

The methods, the instruments, the observation, the brilliant inductions, which have revolutionized our conceptions of the sidereal universe, are not due to the Arabs. They are owing to the genius of the Christian masters whose names have just been given, and to others who have trod in their path. It is in the atmosphere of Christianity, amid the influences which Christian civilization has originated, in the bosom of Christian society, that the amazing progress of natural and physical science in all of its departments has taken place. To hold the Church at all times, much more Christianity itself, responsible for every deed of cruelty and fanaticism which the rulers of the Church committed, is a manifest injustice.

A fallacy still more flagrant, of which the class of writers whom we have in mind are guilty, is deserving of special attention. These writers unconsciously overlook the fact that, for the most part, the pioneers of scientific discovery who have had to endure persecution for broaching novel views upon the constitution and origin of nature have been themselves Christians. It has not been a war of disbelievers and sceptics, on the one side, who have been obliged to suffer at the hands of believers in Christianity for teaching scientific truth. It has commonly been a contest of Christian against Christian. Where there has been a combat of this sort, it has been an intestine struggle. Where the war has existed, it has been a war of Greek against Greek. Christian men, taught in Christian schools, or stimulated intellectually by the aggregate of influences which Christianity has in the process of time, to a great degree, called into being, make some new discovery in science, which clashes with previous opinions, and strikes many as involving the rejection of some article of Christian belief. Debate ensues. Intemperate defenders of the received opinion denounce those who would overthrow it. Intolerant men, if they have the power, instigated by passion, and probably thinking that they are doing God service, resort to force for the purpose of suppressing the obnoxious doctrine, and crushing its advocates. These advocates, denying that Christianity is impugned by their new scientific creed, stand, with more or less constancy, for the defence of it.

If all that has been said of the opposition offered in past times to scientific progress by Christian people were true, no conclusion adverse to the truth of Christianity could be inferred. To justify such a conclusion, it would be necessary to prove that the Christian faith, the doctrine of Christ and of his redemption, carries in it by natural or necessary consequence this antipathy. It might be that the professed adherents of a religious system fail, in numerous instances, to apprehend in certain particulars its true genius. They may identify their own preconceptions with its actual teaching. They may misinterpret that teaching in some important aspects of it. They may carry their own ideas into the sacred books, instead of receiving their ideas from them.



They may fail to apprehend clearly the design and scope of their sacred writings, the character and limits of their authority. They may cling to the letter, and let the spirit, in a measure, escape them. They may fail to separate between the essential and the accidental in their contents, the truth and the vehicle which embodies it. Unless it can be shown, then, that Christianity involves a view of the material world and of its origin, of the laws of nature and its final cause, and of man, which is at variance with the results of natural investigation, nothing which the adherents of Christianity have said or done in this matter is of vital moment. That Christianity, fairly understood and defined, involves no such contradiction to scientific belief is capable of being proved.

A sense of the beauty and sublimity of nature pervades the Bible. The keen relish of the Hebrew writers for the grand and the lovely aspects of nature is specially manifest in the Psalms and prophets. The starry sky, forest, and mountain, and sea, filled the Israelite's heart with mingled awe and rejoicing. Nor was he insensible to the influence of gentler sights and sounds, — to the bleating of the flocks on the hillside, the songs of birds, the flowers and fruits with their varied colors. That sort of asceticism which turns away from nature as something, if not hostile to the spirit, yet beneath man's notice, is in absolute contrast with the tone of the Scriptures. The religion of the Hebrews, not less than the religion of the New Testament, looking on the visible world as the work of God and a theatre of his incessant activity, allowed no such antipathy. It left no room for a cynical contempt or disregard of external beauty. The glowing descriptions of poets and seers, reflecting the spontaneous impressions made by nature on souls alive to its grandeur and its charm, naturally inspired an appreciation of that kind of knowledge which was ascribed to the king who "spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (1 Kings iv. 33).

The unity of nature is presupposed in the Scriptures. It is the correlate of the strict monotheism of the Bible. There is no divided realm, as there is no dual or plural sovereignty. Humboldt refers to the hundred-and-fourth Psalm as presenting the image of the whole cosmos: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot," etc. "We are astonished," writes Humboldt, "to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass the whole universe — the heavens and the earth — sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labor of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalization in the concep-



tion of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent, invisible power, which can renew the earth, or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted, rather than a glowing and gentle, form of poetic creation." It "is a rich and animated conception of the life of nature."<sup>1</sup> This one thought of the *unity* of nature is not an induction, but an intuitive perception involved in the revealed idea of God, and gives to science by anticipation one of its imperative demands.

Not only does the Bible proclaim the unity of nature; it views nature as a system.

In the first place, the operation of "natural causes" is recognized. In the story of the creation, every sort of plant and tree was made to yield "fruit after its kind, *whose seed is in itself*;" and every class of animals, to produce offspring "after its kind." One has only to look at Job and the Psalms to convince himself that the reality of nature and of natural agents is a familiar thought to the sacred writers. It is true that these writers are religious: they do not limit their attention to the proximate antecedent: they go back habitually to the First Cause. If they do not speculate about "second causes," they recognize the order of nature. They may often leap over intermediate subordinate forces, and attribute phenomena directly to the personal source of all energy. This involves no denial of secondary, instrumental means, but only of an atheistic or pantheistic mode of regarding them. If we say that Erwin von Steinbach built the spire of the Strasburg Cathedral, we do not mean that stones and derricks were not employed in the construction of it. We simply trace it immediately to him whose plan and directive energy originated the structure. When the Bible says that "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made," there is involved no denial of the nebular theory. Hardly any assertion relative to the subject is more frequent than that the Scriptures recognize no natural agencies. It is unfounded. It springs from a dull method of interpreting religious phraseology, and from a neglect of multiplied passages which teach the contrary.

Not only are natural causes recognized: nature is governed by law. Its powers are under systematic regulation. To the Hebrew poet, says Humboldt, nature "is a work of creation and order, the living expression of the omnipresence of the Divinity in the visible world."<sup>1</sup> There are no dark realms given up to unreason and disorder. Everywhere the power and wisdom of the Most High have stamped themselves on the creation. The same writer from whom we have just quoted remarks of the closing chapters of the Book of Job: "The meteorological processes which take place in the atmosphere, the formation and solution of vapor, according to the changing direction of the wind,

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmos*, vol. ii. p. 412 (Bohn's ed.).

the play of its colors, the generation of hail and of the rolling thunder, are described with individualizing accuracy: and many questions are propounded which we, in the present state of our physical knowledge, may indeed be able to express under more scientific definitions, but scarcely to answer satisfactorily."<sup>1</sup> In these chapters of Job the mysteries of nature are set forth in connection with the reign of law and the impressive demonstration afforded by it of the inexhaustible wisdom and might of the Creator and Sustainer of all things. The waters in their ebb and flow, the clouds in their gathering and their journeys, the stars and constellations in their regular motion, the course of the seasons, the races of animals, with the means given them for safety and subsistence, in a word, every department of the physical universe, is brought into this picture of the ordered empire of Jehovah. Looking at the Scriptures as a whole, we may say that, so far from contradicting science in their views of nature, they anticipate the fundamental assumptions of science which induction helps to verify, and that nothing in the literature of the remote past is so accordant with that sense of the unity, order, not to speak of the glory, of nature, which science fosters, as are the Sacred Writings.

It was to be expected that a revelation having for its end the moral deliverance of mankind would abstain from authoritative teaching on matters relating to natural science, except so far as they are inseparable from moral and religious truth. Theism, as contrasted with atheism, dualism, pantheism, and polytheism, is a fundamental postulate of revelation and redemption. That the only living God has created, upholds, and dwells in the world of nature, that the world in its order and design testifies to him, that his providence rules all, are truths which enter into the warp and woof of the revealed system. So man's place in creation, his nature, sin as related to his physical and moral constitution, the effect of death, are themes falling within the scope of revealed religion. In general we find that the Bible confines itself to this circle of truths. The ideas of nature, apart from its direct religious bearings, are such as contemporary knowledge had attained. The geography, the astronomy, the meteorology, the geology, of the scriptural authors are on the plane of their times. Copernicus and Columbus, Aristotle and Newton, are not anticipated. The Bible renders unto science the things of science. The principal apparent exception to this procedure is in the somewhat detailed narrative of creation in the first chapter of Genesis.

Respecting this passage, it deserves to be remarked that elsewhere in the Old Testament no stress is laid upon the details as there found. The allusions to the origin of things in Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs do not exhibit the succession of organic beings in just the same order.

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmos*, vol. ii. p. 414.

Even in the hundred-and-fourth Psalm, where the same order in the works of creation appears, — the writer having in mind the Genesis narrative — no weight is attached to the number of days.<sup>1</sup>

If we glance at the history of the interpretation of this passage, we shall find that the meaning given to it in different periods is generally married to the science of the day. From Pallas and Origen the allegorical treatment spread in the ancient Church, and prevailed in the middle ages. Augustine considered that the works of creation were in reality simultaneous, or that creation is timeless. His view was that time began with creation.

Since the rise of modern astronomy and geology, new difficulties have arisen. The physical system, as conceived by the Genesis writer, is said to be geocentric. The origination of the luminaries above, of the earth, and of the organized beings upon it, seems to be placed at an epoch only a few thousand years distant, and to be represented as taking place in a few days. On the contrary, geology, to say nothing here of ethnological and archeological science, shows that the system of things has come into being gradually, that creation stretches over vast periods in the past. Hæwage has been said already to indicate how groundless are the objections which spring merely from inattention to the religious point of view of the biblical writers. The First Cause is brought into the foreground: proximate antecedents are passed over. The features of the Genesis narrative which appear to clash with science are chiefly the order of events in creation, and the chronological statements.

Various hypotheses for the reconciliation of Genesis and science may be left unnoted, for the reason that they are either given up, or deal too largely in fancy to merit serious consideration. There is one theory, however, which still has its advocates, and is entitled to a hearing. It is that which looks on the Genesis narrative as an epitome of the history of creation, "days" being the symbolical equivalent, or representation, of the long eras which science discloses: there being, however, a correspondence in the order of sequence. — a correspondence of a very striking character, and giving evidence of inspiration. It is not supposed that the facts of science were opened to the view of the writer of the first chapter of Genesis: but he saw, possibly in a vision, or through some other method of supernatural teaching, the course of things in their due order. The length of time really consumed in the process, he perhaps may have been as ignorant of as were his readers. Plausible as this theory may appear to some, and supported though it has been by distinguished names in science, as well as in theology, it has to encounter grave difficulties. Equally learned naturalists in large numbers regard the alleged correspondence in the order of events as

<sup>1</sup> See De Wette, *Die Genesis*, p. 12; cf. Isa. xvi. 7-10, xxxviii. 4 seq.; Prov. viii. 24 seq.; Ps. xiv. 2.

unreal, or as effected by a forced interpretation of the narrative. With these naturalists many judicious critics and exegetes are agreed. The matching of the narrative to the geological history is thought to require a more flexible and arbitrary understanding of words and phrases in the former than a sound method of hermeneutics will sanction.<sup>1</sup> Another circumstance which tends to give a precarious character to the hypothesis in question is the documentary composition of Genesis. It is generally agreed that there are two distinct accounts of the creation, from somewhat different points of view, placed in juxtaposition. The hand of the compiler is plainly seen. The new light upon Oriental history and religions which has been obtained raises additional doubt as to the tenableness of the hypothesis of which we are speaking. A mistake has often been made, especially by naturalists, in assuming that the first chapter of Genesis stands by itself, instead of being one of a series of narratives which extend over the earlier portion of the book, and must be examined and judged as a whole. It is ascertained that narratives bearing strong marks of likeness to these were current among the other Semitic peoples with whom the Israelites were related, — among the Phœnicians, and among the Babylonians and Assyrians. How far back can the purer or the Genesis form of these narratives be traced? Are they to be considered the original, most ancient form of traditionary belief, of which the other Semitic legends are a corruption? One thing is evident, that the expurgation and ennobling of these hoary traditions must have been the work of minds illuminated by divine revelation. The divine or inspired element in the Genesis narrative of the creation would thus be made to consist in the exclusion of elements at war with the religion of Israel, and in the casting of the ancient story into a shape in which it should become a vehicle of communicating, not scientific truth, but the great religious ideas which form the kernel of the Mosaic revelation. It cannot be denied that this would be an important step taken in the deliverance of the Israelites from polytheistic superstition. This was enough to effect on that stage of revelation. To substitute a scientific cosmogony for the inherited beliefs of the early Israelites would require magic rather than miracle. It would be either a supernatural teaching of what it belongs to the inquisitive mind of man and the progress of science to discover, or it would be a kind of inspired riddle, the meaning of which could not be in the least divined — in this respect differing from prophecy — until science had rendered the ascertainment of its meaning superfluous.

No theory of evolution clashes with the fundamental ideas of the Bible as long as it is not denied that there *is* a human species, and that man is distinguished from the lower animals by attributes which we know that he possesses. Whether the first of human kind were created

<sup>1</sup> See Dillmann, p. 11.



outright, or, as the second narrative in Genesis represents it, were formed out of inorganic material, out of the dust of the ground, or were generated by inferior organized beings, through a metamorphosis of germs, or some other process,—these questions, as they are indifferent to theism, so they are indifferent as regards the substance of biblical teaching. It is only when, in the name of science, the attempt is made to smuggle in a materialistic philosophy, that the essential ideas of the Bible are contradicted.

As regards the idea of creation, or the origin of things by the act of God's will, it is a point on which science is incompetent to pronounce. It belongs in the realm of philosophy and theology. Natural science can describe the forms of being that exist, can trace them back to antecedent forms, can continue the process until it arrives at a point beyond which investigation can go no farther; then it must hand over the problem to philosophy. To disprove creation would require an insight into the nature of matter and of finite spirit such as no discreet man of science would pretend for a moment to have gained. This question, too, the question what constitutes the reality of things perceived, is a problem to the solution of which natural science lends a certain amount of aid, but which metaphysics and theology have at last to determine as far as the human faculties make it possible. Christianity touches the domain of science in the Christian doctrine of physical death as the penal consequence of sin. Do not all living things die? Do not the animals, those whose organization most resembles that of man, perish at the end of an allotted term? Are not the seeds of dissolution in our physical constitution? Do not the Scriptures themselves dwell on man's natural frailty and mortality? Does not an apostle—the same who asserts that death came in through sin—speak of the first man as of the earth, and mortal?

The narrative in Genesis does not imply that man was immortal in virtue of his physical constitution. It teaches the opposite. Its doctrine is that had he remained obedient to God, and in communion with him, an exemption from mortality would have been granted him. Not only would he have been spared the bodily pains which sin directly entails through physical law, and the remorse and mental anguish which are "the sting of death," but he would have made the transition to the higher form of life and of being through some other means than by the forcing apart of soul and body. The resurrection of Jesus, and the promised resurrection of his followers, is the giving of a renewed organism—"a spiritual body"—in the room of "flesh and blood." The idea is that of a restoration to man of a boon which he forfeited through sin. It is the idea of a development into a higher mode of existence, reached by a process less violent and more natural than the crisis of death. The science which is adventurous enough to find Plato's *Dialogues* and Shakespeare's plays in the sunbeams will hardly assume



to deny the possibility of such a transmutation. Christianity does not permit sin, and the effects of sin on human nature, to be lightly estimated. A moral disorder, a disorder at the core of man's being, brings consequences more portentous than are dreamt of in the philosophy which will not recognize this terrible but patent fact. It is true that the lower animals die. But man is distinguished from them. He is more than a sample of the species. He is an individual. He includes, in his principle of life, rationality, conscience, affinity to God. If he were nothing but an animal, then it might be irrational to think of his escaping the fate of the brute. But, being thus exalted, there is no absurdity in conceiving of such an evolution from the lower to the higher stage of existence, as robs death of the dread associated with it—an evolution, however, conditioned on his perseverance in moral fidelity and fellowship with God. When the Scriptures speak of human weakness, frailty, and mortality, it is to mankind in their present condition, with the consequences of sin upon them, that they refer.

The Scriptures point forward to the perfecting of the kingdom of God, the consummation of this world's history. The physical universe is not an end in itself. It is subservient to moral and spiritual ends. It is not to remain forever in its present state. It is to partake in the redemption. The material system is to be transfigured, ennobled, converted into an abode and instrument suited to the transfigured nature of the redeemed. "Without the loss of its substantial being, matter will exchange its darkness, hardness, weight, inertia, and impenetrability for clearness, brilliancy, elasticity, and transparency."<sup>1</sup> The mystery that overhangs this change is no ground for disbelief. As far as physical science has a right to speak on the subject, it furnishes arguments for the possibility of such an evolution, and corroborates the obscure intimations of Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

The remark is not unfrequently heard, that, though there may be no positive dissonance between science and Scripture, yet the whole conception of the universe which science has brought to us is unlike that of the biblical writers,—so unlike, that the biblical doctrine of redemption is made incredible. The earth, instead of being the centre of the sidereal system, is only a minute member of it. It is, one has said, but "a pinpoint" in the boundless creation. Consequently, man is reduced to insignificance. How can we imagine a mission of the Son of God, an incarnation of Deity, in behalf of a race inhabiting this little sphere? The incredibility of the Christian doctrine is heightened, we are told, by the probability, given by analogy, that other rational beings without number, possibly of higher grade than man, exist in the multitudinous worlds which astronomy has unveiled.

<sup>1</sup> Dormer, *Christl. Glaubenslehre*, ii. 973.

<sup>2</sup> See Tait and Stewart, *The Unseen Universe*.

The whole point of this difficulty lies in the supposed insignificance of man. He who entertains such thoughts will do well to ponder certain eloquent sayings of Pascal. What is the physical universe, with its worlds upon worlds, compared with the *thought* of it in man's mind? Who is it that discovers the planets, weighs them, measures their paths, predicts their motions? Shall bulk be the standard of worth? Shall greatness be judged by the space that is filled? One should remember, also, the sublime observation of Kant on the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us, — one connecting us with a vast physical order, in which, to be sure, we occupy a small place, but the other binding us to a moral order of infinite moment, giving to our spiritual being a dignity which cannot be exaggerated. As to possible races of rational creatures in other worlds, who, if they exist, can affirm that the mission and work of Christ have no significance for them? But, not to lose ourselves in conjecture, the objection is seen, on other grounds, to be without any good foundation. The existence of any number of rational creatures elsewhere does not diminish in the least the worth of man; it does not lessen his need of help from God; it does not weaken the appeal which his forlorn condition makes to the heart of the heavenly Father; it does not lower the probability of a divine interposition for his benefit. Shall the Samaritan turn away from one sufferer at the wayside, because myriads of other men exist, many of them, perhaps, in a worse condition than he? This method of reasoning and of feeling is quickly condemned when it is met with in human relations. It would deaden the spirit of benevolence. It is not less fallacious, and not less misleading, when applied to the relations of God to mankind.

#### NOTE 23 (p. 343)

It appears to be thought by many at present that the argument for Christian revelation from prophecy is of little weight. In treatises on Christian evidences, it has fallen into the background, or has disappeared altogether. By some it would seem to be considered an objection, rather than a support, to the Christian cause. This impression is due in part to wrong methods of interpretation that were formerly in vogue.

Prophecy, looked at in the light of a more scientific exegesis and a larger conception of the nature of prophetic inspiration, furnishes a striking and powerful argument for revelation.

One thing which modern theologians have learned respecting Hebrew prophecy is that prediction was not the exclusive, or even the principal, constituent in the poet's function. The prophets were raised up to instruct, rebuke, warn, and comfort the Israel of their own day. They dealt with the exigencies and obligations of the hour. They were the spokesmen of God, consciously speaking to the people by his commis-

sion, and through his Spirit inspiring them. Prediction was involved, both as to the near and the distant future. But, as we see from the case of the prophets of the New Testament church (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 31), foretelling was not the essential thing. The prophet was an inspired preacher.

Another change in the modern view of prophecy is in the perception of the limitations to which the prophets were subject, as to the extent and the form of their vaticinations. Allegorical interpretation, in the form, for example, which ascribed to the language of the prophets a double or multiple sense of which they were conscious, or in the form which laid into their words a meaning at variance with their natural import, is now set aside. There is a broader view taken of the matter. The distinction between the inmost idea, the underlying truth, and the form in which it is conceived, or the imagery under which it is beheld, by the seer, is recognized. The central conception of the organic relation of the religion of the Old Testament to that of the New, the first being rudimental in its whole character, and thus in its very nature predictive, — just as a developed organism is foreshadowed in its lower forms or stages, — illuminates the whole subject. It suggests the limitations of view which must of necessity inhere in prophetic anticipation, even though it be supernatural in its origin.

Prediction, in order to be an evidence of revelation, must be shown to be truly pre-diction, — that is, to have been uttered prior to the event to which it relates. On this point, as regards the Old Testament prophecies, there is no room for reasonable doubt.<sup>1</sup> The predictions must be shown not to spring from native sagacity, or wise forecast based on natural causes known to be in operation. And they must be verified to an extent not to be explained either by the supposition of accidental coincidence, or by supposing the effect to be wrought by the influence of the predictions themselves.

If we glance at the prophets as they present themselves to our view on the pages of the Old Testament, we shall be helped to judge whether their predictions can endure the test of these criteria.

A man was not made a prophet by virtue of any natural talents that he possessed, or any acquired knowledge. He might, to be sure, be a great poet; but this of itself did not make him a prophet. The prophets, it is true, were not cut off from a living relation to their times. They did not appear as visitors from another planet. But what the prophet had learned, whether in "the schools of the prophets" (when such existed, and if he belonged to them), or from the study of the law, and of other prophets who preceded him, did not furnish him with the

<sup>1</sup> If the late date of the Book of Daniel is accepted, its predictions, as far as they relate to events prior to the Maccabean age, must be left out of the account.

message which he delivered. He was not like the rabbi or scribe of a later day. He did not take up his office of his own will. So far from this, he is conscious of being called of God by an inward call which he cannot and dare not resist. The splendid passage in which Isaiah recurs to the vision in the temple, when "the foundations of the thresholds shook," and the Voice was heard to say, "Whom shall I send?" shows the awe-inspiring character of the divine call which set the prophet apart for his work (Isa. vi.). The true prophet is conscious of being called to declare, not the results of his own investigations or reflections, but the counsels and will of the Most High. He utters the word of God. It may be a message that runs counter to his own preference, that excites the deepest grief in his soul, that overcomes him with surprise or terror; but he cannot keep silent. So conscious is he that he is not speaking out of his own heart, as do the false prophets, that at times he no longer speaks *in propria persona* as the deputy of God: God himself speaks, in the first person, by his lips. Yet as a rule, and especially in the later and higher stages of prophecy, the state of the prophet is not that of ecstasy. He is in full possession of reason and consciousness. He distinguishes between his own thoughts and words and the word of God. There is no bewilderment. The truth which he pours forth from a soul exalted, yet not confused, by emotion is not something reasoned out. It is an immediate perception or intuition. He is a seer: he hears or beholds that which his tongue declares. The intuition of the prophet cannot be resolved into a natural power of divination. What power of divination could look forward to the far remote consummation of the workings of Providence in history? The prophets give utterance to no instinctive presage of national feeling. Commonly their predictions are in the teeth of the cherished aspirations of the people.

The prophets predicted events which human foresight could not anticipate. Yet there is no such correspondence between prediction and fulfilment, that history is written in detail in advance of the actual occurrences. There is no such identity as to disturb the action of human free-will, as it would be deranged if everything that man were to do and to suffer in the future were mapped out before his eyes. Moreover, the conditions under which the ideas given to the prophet necessarily shape themselves in his thought and imagination — which may be called the human side of prophecy — give rise to a greater or less disparity between the mode of the prediction and the mode of fulfilment. This will constitute an objection to the reality of prophecy, only to those who cannot break through the shell, and penetrate to the kernel within it. On this topic Ewald writes as follows: —

"A projected picture of the future is essentially a presentiment, a surmise; *i.e.* an attempt and effort of the peering spirit to form from the basis of a certain truth a definite idea of the form the future will take, and to pierce



through the veil of the unseen: it is not a description of the future with those strict historical lines which will characterize it when it actually unfolds itself. The presentiment or foreboding advances at once to the general scope and great issue. Before the prophet who is justly foreboding evil, there rises immediately the vision of destruction as the final punishment; but probably this does not come to pass immediately, or only partially; and yet the essential truth of the threat remains as long as the sins which provoked it continue, whether it be executed sooner or later. Or when the gaze of the prophet, eager from joyous hope or sacred longing, dwells on the consideration of the so-called Messianic age, this hovers before him as coming soon and quickly; what he clearly sees appearing to him as near at hand. But the development of events shows how many hindrances still stand in the way of the longed-for and surmised consummation, which again and again vanishes from the face of the present: nevertheless, the pure truth that the consummation will come, and must come precisely under the conditions foretold by the prophet, remains unchangeably the same; it retains its force during every new period, and from time to time some part of the great hope finds its fulfilment. Further: the presentiment endeavors to delineate its subject-matter with the greatest clearness and definiteness, and, in order to describe really unseen things, borrows the comparisons and illustrations that are at hand from the past and popular ideas. To set forth the presentiment of evil, there occurs the memory of Sodom, or all the terrible things of nature; whilst for bright hope and aspiration, there is the memory of Mosaic and Davidic times. But the prophet does not really intend to say that only the things that occurred in Sodom, and under Moses and David, will recur, or that mere earthquakes and tempests will happen; but, using these comparisons, he means something far higher.”<sup>1</sup>

The prophet, beholding things future as if present, may leap over long intervals of time. Events may appear to him near at hand which are really distant. Thus, in Isaiah, the Messianic era follows immediately on the liberation of the Israelites from captivity. Round numbers may be used, — numbers having only a symbolical significance.<sup>2</sup> Events may be grouped according to the causal rather than the temporal relation between them.

On this matter of chronology, Ewald has suggestive remarks: —

“The prophetic presentiment, finally, endeavoring in certain distressing situations to peer still more closely into the future, ventures even to fix terms and periods for the development of the events which are foreseen as certain; yet all these more definite limitations and calculations are so many essays of a peculiar class, to be conceived of and judged by their own nature and from the motive that produced them, to say nothing of the fact that everything that the prophet threatens or promises is conditioned by the reception which his advice and command, indeed, which his suppressed yet necessary and of themselves clear presuppositions, meet with. Accordingly, the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Ewald's *Prophets of the Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Oehler, *Theologie d. alten Testament*, p. 205.



phetic picture in the end is not to be judged by its garments, but by the meaning of the thoughts and demands which is hidden within it; and it would be a source of constant misconception to conceive of and judge picture and presentiment otherwise than in accordance with their own peculiar life and nature. Jerusalem was not destroyed so soon as Micah (ch. i.-iii.) foreboded: nevertheless, inasmuch as the same causes which provoked that presentiment were not radically removed, the destruction did not ultimately fail to come. Literally, Jerusalem was neither besieged nor delivered exactly as Isaiah (ch. xxix.) foresaw: still, as he had foreseen, the city was exposed during his lifetime to the greatest danger, and experienced essentially as wonderful a deliverance. In the calculations (Isa. xxxii. 14 *seq.*, comp. v. 10, xxix. 1-8, and especially v. 17), if the words are taken slavishly, there lies a minor contradiction, which, with a freer comparison of all the pictures as they might exist before the mind of the prophet, it is granted, quickly disappears. The punishment of Israel (Hos. ii.) consists in expulsion into the wilderness (ch. iii. *seq.*); it consists rather in other things, *e.g.* in being driven away to Assyria and Egypt. Yet all these presentiments were equally possible, and contain no contradiction, unless they are confounded with historical assertions or even express commands. As appears from Jer. xxvi. 1-19, at this period of Jewish history a correct feeling of the true meaning of prophetic utterances in this respect was still in existence, and they were not so misunderstood as they were in the middle ages, and as they still are in many quarters."<sup>1</sup>

Closely related to the partial indifference to mere chronological relations which is seen, for example, in what is termed "the perspective of prophecy," is another feature, — that of the gradual fulfilment, the preliminary and the completed verification, of predictions. Glowing ideals stir the soul of the prophet. The realization of them he may connect with personages already living or soon to appear, and with conditions with which he is conversant. In the ways anticipated by him they have in truth a verification, but one that falls far short of the prophetic vision. The accordance is real, but only up to a certain point: the discordance is too great to be removed by treating the prediction as an hyperbole. Hence the full verification is still looked for; and *it comes*. The development of the religion of Israel brings in the complete realization of the grand idea which floated before the prophet's mind. This is not a novel theory of prophecy, peculiar to our day. Lord Bacon speaks of "that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies; being of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and are therefore not fulfilled punctually at once, but *have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages*, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age."<sup>2</sup> The mind of the seer or psalmist was illuminated, so that the plan of Jehovah in the ordering of the past

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *The Advancement of Learning*, b. ii. (Spedding's ed., vi. 200).

course of Israel's history, and the real import of the present conjunction of circumstances, were unveiled to his mind. From this point of view he glanced forward, and, illuminated still by the Spirit of God, he beheld the future unfold itself, — not, to be sure, as to the eye of the Omniscient, but under the limitations imposed by finite powers acting within a restricted environment. For prophetic inspiration is no operation of magic. An apostle represents the prophets as seeking earnestly to get at the meaning of their own prophecies, — “searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,” etc.<sup>1</sup>

The Old Testament prophecies fall into two classes. The first embraces the predictions of a Messianic character, especially those relating to the kingdom and the spread of it. The second includes prophecies of particular occurrences.

We begin with the first class of predictions. The prophets look forward to a great salvation in the future, a period of rest and blessedness for the people.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes this redemption is depicted as a great triumph over all the enemies of Israel, when the state appears in unexampled glory and splendor; the land yielding abundant fruits, and all divine blessings being showered upon its inhabitants. In other prophecies the predominant feature is the moral: it is the forgiveness of sin, the prevalence of holiness and righteousness, on which the eye is fixed. Sometimes the great redemption is foreseen as a gift to the seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel. But in other places the prophets take a wider view, and describe the heathen nations as sharing in the blessing, and the kingdom as extending over the whole earth. Now the Redeemer is Jehovah himself; now the hope centres in a particular monarch, or on a class by whom the grand deliverance is to be achieved; and again it is a person to appear in the future, a ruler of the family of David. The house of David is chosen to carry the kingdom to its consummation: it stands in the relation of sonship to God. Then there is a limitation: the great promise is to be realized from among the sons of David. Finally, the prophetic eye fastens its gaze upon an individual in the dim future; as in Ps. ii., where the whole earth owns the sway of the king, who is the Son of God; in Ps. lxxii., where the coming and universal sway of the Prince of peace, and the succor afforded by him to the needy and distressed, are described; and in Ps. cx., in which the conqueror of the earth unites with the kingly office that of an everlasting priesthood, — a priesthood not of the Levitical order.<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere (Isa. liii.) the great deliverance is expected through a suffering “servant of Jehovah,” who dies not for his own sins, but for the sins of the people. First, the “servant of Jehovah” is spoken of as Israel collectively

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 11,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bleek, *Einl. in d. Alt. Test.*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Oehler, ii. 258.

taken, then as the holy and faithful class among the people; and finally, in this remarkable chapter, there is, not improbably, a farther step in individualizing the conception, and a single personage, in whom all the qualities of the ideal "servant" combine in a faultless image, rises before the mind of the seer.

This glimpse of the most general outlines of Old Testament prophecy cannot but deeply impress one who has any just appreciation of the religion of Jesus Christ, and of Christendom even as it now is, to say nothing of what may, not unreasonably, be expected in the future. Under these different phases of prediction, there is one grand expectation, viz., that the religion of Israel will itself be perfected, and will prevail on the earth. Follow back the course of prophecy, and you find traces of this expectation — either sublime in the extreme, or foolhardy in the extreme, as the event should prove — in the earliest records of Hebrew history. Concede all that, with any show of reason, can be said about the variety in the ideals and anticipations of the Hebrew prophets, there remains enough of correspondence to them in the origin, character, and progress of Christianity, to suggest a problem not easy to be solved on any naturalistic hypothesis. Grant that the prophets had an intense conviction of the reality of Jehovah, of his power, and of his right to rule. This conviction, be it remembered, is itself to be accounted for; but, taking this for granted, we find in it no adequate means of explaining the confident declaration that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."<sup>1</sup> Why should they not have stopped with the anticipation of the downfall and destruction of the Pagan nations? How could they tell that from Judæa a universal kingdom should take its rise? How could they overcome those obstacles to such an anticipation which the actual course of history, as it was going forward under their eyes, appeared to involve?

Let the reader imagine that, twenty-five or thirty centuries ago, the mountain cantons of Switzerland were inhabited by tribes insignificant in numbers and strength, while extensive and powerful empires, like ancient Rome after the conquest of Carthage and the East, or modern Russia, are on their borders. Suppose that the people thus imagined to exist had a religion unique, and distinct from that of all other nations. Yet even in times when their little territory is ravaged by vast armies, and the bulk of its population dragged off into slavery, there arise among them men who, with all the energy of confidence of which the human mind is capable, declare that their religion will become universal, that it will supersede the gorgeous idolatries of their conquerors, that from them will emerge a kingdom which will overcome, and purify as it conquers, all the other kingdoms of the world. And suppose, further, that actually, after the lapse of centuries, from that diminutive, despised

<sup>1</sup> Hab. ii. 14; cf. Oehler, ii, 196.

tribe of shepherds and herdsmen there does spring a development of religion which spreads, until it already comprehends all the nations that now profess Christianity; there does spring a Legislator and Guide of men, whose spiritual sway is acknowledged by hundreds of millions, and to the progress of whose reign no limit can be set: would not the correspondence, or the degree of correspondence, between those far-off predictions and the subsequent phenomena be a fact which is nothing short of a miracle?

The second class of prophecies pertain to particular occurrences. In inquiring whether they were fulfilled, we have to consider the obscurity which, notwithstanding recent discoveries in archæology, still belongs to the annals of the nations contemporary with Israel. We have to consider, moreover, that predictions of this sort were never absolute, in the sense that God might not revoke a sentence in case repentance should intervene. The Book of Jonah is designed partly to dispel the error that a verdict of God, because once announced, is irreversible. The prophets entreat that their own predictions may not be fulfilled, and their prayers sometimes avail. Nevertheless, the instances of the actual verification of prophecies of this kind, which could not have sprung from any mere human calculation and foresight, are so numerous, and of so marked a character, that the reality of a divine illumination of the prophet's mind cannot rationally be denied.<sup>1</sup> Such an instance is the prophecies of Isaiah respecting the rapidly approaching downfall of the kingdoms of Israel and Syria, which had cemented an alliance with each other, and of the failure of their project against Judah.<sup>2</sup> Another instance in Isaiah is the failure of the powerful army of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, in his siege of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Other examples are afforded by the definite predictions of Jeremiah respecting the return of the people from the exile. Such prophecies cannot be referred to any shrewd forecast on the part of the seers who uttered them. When, for example, the Syro-Israelitish alliance menaced Judah and Jerusalem, the peril was imminent, else it would not have been true of Ahab and of his subjects that "his heart shook, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake before the wind."<sup>4</sup> Apart from the impossibility of foretelling such events, the naturalistic explanation presupposes a mental state in the authors of the prophecies, which is quite diverse from the fact.

A class of critics attribute the Old Testament predictions exclusively to natural causes. In sustaining their thesis, they seek to show that the prophecies have failed of a fulfilment, to such an extent as to preclude the supposition that they were the product of revelation. To this end, as regards the general prophecies, they not only insist on attaching a

<sup>1</sup> See Bleek, *Einl. in d. Alt. Test.*, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxxvii. 21 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Isa. vii. 2.



literal sense to passages which point to the perpetual continuance of the nation of Israel, the final restoration of the Jews, the subjugation of their enemies, and the like; but they refuse to consider these features of prophecy, which the event has not literally verified, as limitations in the perception of the prophet, not inconsistent with his inspiration. In other words, they commonly allow no medium between a stiff supernaturalism, which ascribes exact verity to the *form* of the prophet's vaticination, and a bald theory of naturalism. This position is unphilosophical. It overlooks the fact that the vehicle of revelation is human, and fettered, to a degree, by natural conditions which the inspiring Spirit does not sweep away. To break through these limitations altogether would be to substitute a dictation at once magical and incomprehensible for a divine illumination adapted to the mental condition and the environment of the recipient of it. The prophet Jeremiah (ch. xxxiii. 18), in a memorable passage, foresees a momentous change and advance in the religion of Israel. A "new covenant" is to be made with "the house of Judah,"—so radical is this change to be! The law is to be written in their hearts, that is, the law is to be converted into an inward principle; and there is to be a forgiveness of sin: "I will remember their sin no more." These cardinal features of the new dispensation, which Christianity, ages afterward, was to bring in, are thus summarily set forth with impressive emphasis. Yet the same Jeremiah says that "a man shall never be wanting to sit on the throne of David, nor Levites to offer sacrifice on the altar."<sup>1</sup> "The Jew," says Dr. Payne Smith, "could only use such symbols as he possessed, and, in describing the perfectness of the Christian Church, was compelled to represent it as the state of things under which he lived, freed from all imperfections."<sup>2</sup> In the last chapter of the Book of Isaiah<sup>3</sup> the prophet describes in an exulting strain the glorious days when there shall be, as it were, new heavens and a new earth; when priests and levites shall be taken even from the Gentiles; when the old forms of worship, with the exception of the new moon and the sabbath, shall have passed away; and when "all flesh" shall worship before Jehovah. Yet here Jerusalem is conceived of as supreme, and the centre of worship. To break away absolutely from this conception, inconsistent though it be with the union of "all flesh" in the adoration of God, would have been to ascend to a point of view higher even than that which the apostles had attained for years after they began their ministry. Yet in these cases, according to Dr. Kuenen's method of viewing prophecy,<sup>4</sup> for example, the circumstance that the prophet failed to see the future in form and detail proves that what he did see was through his own unaided vision. This procedure implies an exclu-

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxiii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Speaker's Commentary, in loco.*

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxvi. 20–23, cf. lxii. 2. lxv. 15.

<sup>4</sup> In his work on Prophecy.



sion of the natural factor from revelation and inspiration, and is of a piece with one-sided conceptions of the supernatural in the Scriptures, which modern theology has set aside, or which are clung to only by rigid adherents of an obsolescent system.

With reference to prophecies of particular events, — the second class of predictions, — the class of critics referred to are disposed to bind the prophets too closely to the letter of their predictions; for example, in what they say of times and seasons. They do not allow sufficient weight to the conditional character that belongs to this species of prediction where retributive inflictions are concerned. If it can be shown that, in certain cases, prophecy failed of its accomplishment, this would not establish their main proposition, unless it could be proved that the cases where the prediction proved true may be considered the result of accident, or the product of natural foresight. A marksman may hit a target often enough to exclude the hypothesis of accident, even if he miss it occasionally. If he thus hits the mark when he is known to be blind, or when the target is out of sight, a miraculous guidance of the arrow must necessarily be assumed. But exceptions to the correspondence of event with prediction are not easily made out. The progress of historical research has removed difficulties in regard to some passages that were once thought to have remained unverified; the passage, for example, in Isaiah, predicting the conquest of Tyre.<sup>1</sup>

The relation of the "false prophets" who condemned them may remind us of the theory of Grote and others respecting the relation of Socrates and Plato to the Sophists. But Grote's view of the Sophists breaks down under his own concessions that Socrates and Plato were great reformers; working, not, like other teachers, for hire, but from a nobler impulse. Socrates and Plato differed from Protagoras and his followers in their principles, method, and spirit. But the disparity between the true and the false prophets was more radical. That among those who are denounced as "false prophets" were individuals not conscious of an evil intent, or actuated by a fraudulent purpose, may be true. This is the truth that is contained in Kuenen's view of the subject. But the statements of Köhler, which Kuenen himself quotes, go farther. There was a set of "false prophets," — "lying prophets," as they were called by the prophets of the canon. Those pretended prophets spoke, not by the command of Jehovah, but out of their own hearts. It was from no irresistible impulse from within that they uttered their smooth words. They flattered the vain hopes of kings and people. They cry "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace. They do not disturb the people in their indolent self-indulgence. Frequently they are instigated by covetousness and greed of gain. This class of prophets were moved by a secular, to the comparative exclusion of a religious, spirit. It was na-

<sup>1</sup> See Cheyne's *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, i. 132.

tional power and aggrandizement, rather than truth and righteousness, which absorbed their interest. Against this whole class the true prophets carry on a perpetual warfare. Unless these were guilty of gross slander and intolerance, magnifying differences of judgment into flagrant sins, Kuenen's view of the subject is defective. On the one side stood the "false prophets" and the people whom they deceived. But the true prophets generally faced a resisting and persecuting public opinion. "Who hath believed our preaching?" is their sad and indignant complaint. The psychological facts connected with the utterance of the prophetic oracles reveal their nature. Was the inward call of the true prophet — that overwhelming influence upon the soul, when the mighty hand of God was laid upon him — a delusion? And how shall it be explained that the prophet was often dismayed by the glimpses of the future that burst upon his vision, that he strove to turn away from the prospect, that he was driven to foretell what he himself dreaded, and begged God to avert? Shall these extraordinary experiences of the soul, so exceptional in their character, so powerful in their effect, be deemed a morbid excitement? or resolved into a mere play of natural emotion?

Dr. Kuenen says truly that "the canonical prophets have struggled forward in advance of their nation and of their own fellow-prophets."<sup>1</sup> "Struggled forward?" Dr. Kuenen professes to be a theist. Why should he apparently shut out the influence of the Spirit of God? Why not, even on the theory of an uplifting of a portion of a class above their fellows, attribute this phenomenon, which no discerning man can fail to regard as amazing, to a special unction from above? It may be allowed that there were natural qualifications which led to the choice of a prophet. His mental and spiritual characteristics fitted him to be the recipient of the divine influence. But to exclude or depreciate this divine influence appears more congruous with the Pelagian conceptions of deism than with a theism which recognizes God as immanent, and ever active in the realm of the finite. Ewald has pointed out in a striking way the habit of the prophet to distinguish between what was given him and what he produced of himself, — a peculiarity which disproves the naturalistic hypothesis, unless one is prepared to consider the prophet a half-insane enthusiast. It is not to be thought, observes Ewald, that because, in passages, the prophet's "own *I* disappears in the presence of another *I*," he "really forgets himself, and begins to speak without self-consciousness, or ends in unconsciousness and frenzy." "Neither has his introduction of God, as speaking in the first person, sunk into a crystallized and idle habit." "But the prophet always starts from his own experience to announce what he has already seen in the spirit, and again ends with his own experience. *Nor in the course of his utterance does he ever lose the consciousness of the fine boundary lines between the divine and the human.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> *The Prophets, etc.*, p. 41.

There were criteria for distinguishing the true prophet from the spurious. The prophet might work a miracle; but even this was no absolute proof, since the pretended prophet might at least seem to do the same. Nor was the correspondence of the event to the prediction a sure evidence of genuine prophecy.<sup>1</sup> But in the genuine prophet there was a sympathy in the depths of the soul with Jehovah and his law, and with the purpose of God in the course of history, the goal of which he saw in the far future. There was a power and majesty in the true prophets, which nothing but the presence of God's spirit could impart to them. "When the spirit of God lays hold of them, and compels them to speak, they demand obedience to their mere word. And as, in spite of all murmuring, the congregation of Israel in the main followed Moses, so neither the bitter hatred of the idolatrous party in Samaria, nor the vacillation of the king, could cripple the influence of Elijah and Elisha.<sup>2</sup> So Saul at the head of his victorious army dared not withstand the word of Samuel.<sup>3</sup> So Eli bowed himself to the divine message;<sup>4</sup> and David, in the midst of all his glory, endured the rebuke of Nathan.<sup>5</sup> Without weapons, without the prestige derived from priestly consecration, without learning and human wisdom, the prophets demand obedience, and are conscious of the influence which they can exert over the men of power in the nation."<sup>6</sup> "A true prophet of God, by his prayers and his knowledge of God's will, by the warnings that he utters against perils and false enterprises; is 'the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;' that is, like a shielding host of armed men." "On the other hand, their persons are so consecrated to God that it can naturally seem dangerous for simple mortals to come into near contact with these men of God, who may bring their guilt to the remembrance."

Underlying Dr. Kuenen's views of prophecy is a deistic mode of thought. There is a reluctance to admit a direct agency of God in connection with spiritual phenomena of the most unique and impressive character. Yet in his work he allows an immediate act of God in connection with the separation of Abraham and the training of Moses.<sup>8</sup> The Deity, in his system, if he comes in at all, comes in as a *deus ex machina*. Hence he finds it difficult to conceive of grades of inspiration, of degrees in the agency of the supernatural, of lower and higher stages in prophetic illumination. The supposed difficulty of drawing a sharp line between natural divination and soothsaying, and the earliest phenomena of Hebrew prophecy, moves him to conclude that the latter, even in its grandest manifestations, springs wholly from the unassisted faculties of man, — which is like inferring, from the fact that we cannot

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xiii. 1 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Kings xxi. 20 *seq.*, 27 *sec.*; 2 Kings iii. 13 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 21

<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 27 *seq.*

<sup>5</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 13 *seq.*; cf. xxiv. 11 *seq.*

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings iv. 13.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24; 2 Kings iv. 9; Luke v. 8. Schultz, p. 821.

<sup>8</sup> Kuenen, *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*, p. 579.

fix the exact point when a boy becomes a man, that no man exists, or that all men are boys. There is a latent postulate of a great gulf between the natural and the supernatural. It is true that prophecy, from lower beginnings, mounted to a higher level. In the early history of Israel methods of divination were taken up by the people from their Canaanite neighbors. Like theism in general, like other institutions and practices in religion, the purifying power from above worked out the end by degrees. Some things, such as magic and sorcery, were always prosecuted.

As a part of a deistic mode of view, the work of the prophets is confined by some to the origination of "an ethical monotheism." The New Testament system is the completion of this work. Redemption, the hope of the prophets, the hope realized in Christ, is left out in this description of the religion of the Bible. To one who adopts this interpretation of the significance of the work of Christ, the links of connection between the religion of the Old Testament and the religion of the New, which the apostles perceived to exist, must appear unreal. Hence the exposition of the Old Testament system by the New Testament writers, their recognition of the typical character of the Old Testament institutions and rites, and their explanation of the prophecies, must seem to be a house built on the sand. First, there is a narrow conception of prophecy, in which phraseology and form are put on a level with the grand, living ideas which they embody. Next, there is a narrow conception of Christianity as merely or chiefly a doctrine of ethical monotheism. Lastly, by way of corollary, the prophets did not prophesy, but are made by the apostles to prophesy only through a groundless and fanciful understanding of their writings.

There are prophecies in the New Testament as well as in the Old. The general predictions relative to the perpetuity, extension, and transforming influence of the Gospel, when one compares the circumstances under which they were uttered with the subsequent history of Christianity down to the present day, discover a knowledge more than human. The words of Jesus to the disciple Peter, "On this rock I build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," are a declaration that, on a basis of belief in him as the Messenger and Son of God, a community was arising which no power could destroy. Consider who this Peter was to whom Jesus spoke, who Jesus was, as regards outward condition and resources, and the insignificance of his following, and then glance at the Christian Church, advancing from its obscure beginnings to victory over Judaic and Pagan opposition and to its present commanding place in human society! The prediction that the Gospel would be like leaven in the world of mankind, like the smallest of seeds, evolving from itself a lofty and spreading tree — who, not possessed of a discernment more than human, could have then foreseen that such an effect was to follow? Then there are particular

predictions, of which the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is, perhaps, the most remarkable. The sagacity of man might have judged that a desperate conflict was likely to break out between the Romans and the Jews, but who could have predicted with any assurance that city and temple would be reduced to a ruin? With this prediction, one should connect, in his recollection, the prophecy that the vineyard would be given out to other husbandmen, that the treasure of God's best gifts would pass into the custody of the Gentiles. The Founder looked forward to the death of Judaism and the birth of Christendom! It is not to be overlooked that the prophecies which are referred to, like prophecies in general, are not pronounced as results of calculation, as probabilities founded on the examination of evidence on the one side and on the other. They are uttered in that tone of absolute confidence which belongs to an assured insight. It is the penetrating glance into the future of one to whom the counsels of Omniscience have been supernaturally revealed.



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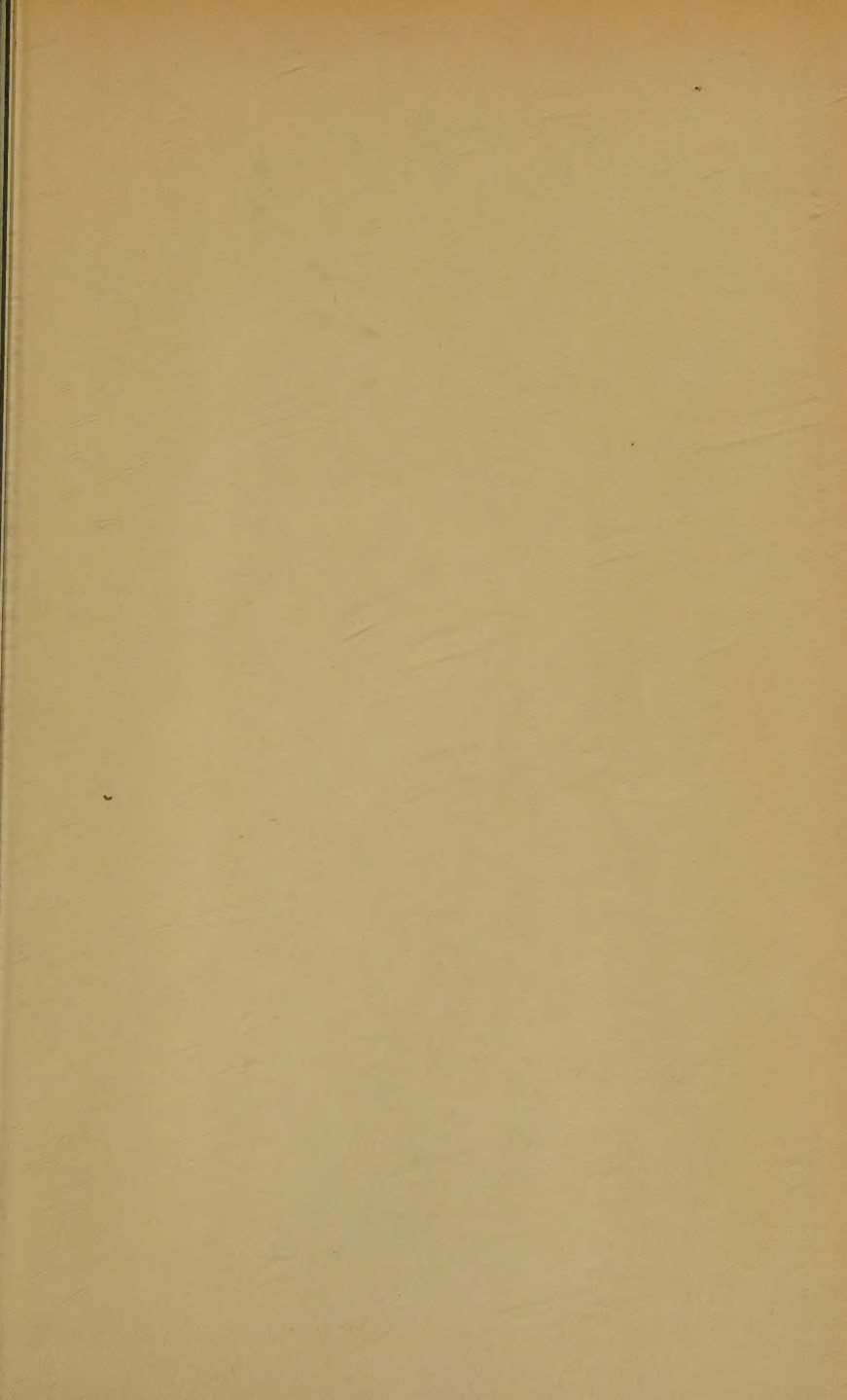
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